

FIRST PHOTOS! BRAC'S NEW DESTROYER WRECK p46



S P O R T

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APRIL 1997 VOLUME 5 NO. 2
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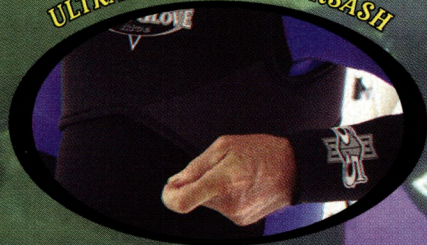
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ON A SINGLE BREATH

In a two-part series, editor Pierce Hoover takes an up-close look at the resurgent sport of free diving. Along the way you'll meet practitioners from every facet of the game — blue-water hunters, commercial fishermen, cutting-edge record setters — and learn about the techniques and dangers of breath-hold diving.



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If you're going to play the evolutionary game there's one cardinal rule — reproduce to keep the gene pool cooking. Doug Perrine's photo essay provides you with a stunning look at how different species along the food chain handle their generational duties.

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From Normandy to Japan, they were first on the beach — sans fins, mask or wetsuits. A look at the hardmen — and fathers — of underwater combat. By Gary P. Joyce

A COLD WARRIOR GOES DOWN IN A WARM SEA

She was a relic of the Cold War, but, renamed the *Tibbetts* and sunk off Cayman Brac, she'll start life anew as an underwater ecosystem. Jesse Cancelmo takes a first look. 46





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On the cover

*A green sea turtle and diver off Maui.
By Andrew Wood*

Contents: A lemon shark pup immediately after birth. By Doug Perrine.

Guess what? The Astral Warriors are getting certified!

NEW-AGE SCUBA

Not so long ago, I ran into a long-forgotten college buddy, whom I remembered as a ruthless, type-A stock broker best kept far away from your wallet and your wife.

In the past 15 years, he's lost a bit of hair, gained a few pounds and is no longer chasing the Dow Jones or the secretaries. Instead, he works with an outreach shelter, he told me, and is devoting a lot of time to his family.

Wow! It was a complete 180-degree personality shift.

"I owe it all to The Warriors," he told me. "With their guidance, I have liberated myself from the fears and limitations of the lower self ... you really should come with me next week."

OK, so I'm open to whatever, and curiosity has led me to witness a Sundance ceremony, sneak into a voodoo ritual and — once — even join an Amway rally. What time on Tuesday?

On Tuesday evening, I removed my shoes to join the Astral Warriors of Peace for an exploration to the Nth dimension. To facilitate astral projection, we formed a circle and held hands, chanting rhythmic mantras to help liberate our collective consciousness from the bonds of time, self and limited spatial realities.

Later, when the candles were snuffed and lights came up, we were asked to share our personal experiences.

"I traveled to the Vortex, and was asked to heal the earth through prayer," the first Warrior told us. "I entered a place beyond time and space," the second added. "No, I'm not saying it right. There was no self, and no place."

And then it was my turn to share — and to wing it.

"This memory comes from a time when cold descended on the world [last winter]. I escape the cold by rising into the sky, and finally alighting on a Magical Realm. From there, I board a white vessel to glide across a liquid medium clear as glass, guided by a knowledgeable other

who brings pilgrims to this site every day.

"I don the garb of the blue warrior, stand and take a leap of faith into the liquid void [holding firmly on to my mask]. At first, I sink, then I adjust, and find myself floating effortlessly. I am suspended between earth and sky in a silent kingdom filled with blue light. The only sound is that of my own breathing.

"I glide over ancient formations, unknown to man until pilgrims such as myself came to this blue kingdom. My guide beckons me forward, and we are surrounded by golden denizens of the realm [darn yellowtail snappers], who swoop and flutter in our midst.

"All too soon, my guide motions that it is time to leave. We ascend into the light, and are conveyed to a place of warmth, mirth and sustenance."

I have the group's undivided attention. "What do you call this place of warmth, mirth and sustenance?" they ask me.

"Well, maybe sustenance is a bit of a stretch if you order the nachos, but the place is known as Carlos N' Charlie's."

"And this Magical Realm? What is it called, and can we return there with you?"

"It is known as Cozumel," I reply, "and to travel to this Great Blue Nirvana, you will need a C-card and a plane ticket. [The group can cover mine]."

Guess what? The Astral Warriors are getting certified, then it's off to Cozumel.

So be warned, if you find yourself in that place of mirth and sustenance, and are suddenly carried into the Nth dimension along with the Astral Warriors, don't blame the margaritas. Instead, give yourself credit for discovering the secret of the Blue Nirvana without the aid of meditation, crystal power or higher consciousness.

You're so enlightened, all it took was an air fill. ■

SPORT
DIVER
MAGAZINE

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PET CLAMS. REALLY.

If you're not into saltwater aquariums, this is going to sound really goofy. On the other hand, if you do have a marine aquarium, you're going to think this is really neat.

See, there's this guy and his wife on this little island called Wau (and pronounced, of course, *wow*) in the middle of Mili Atoll in the middle of the Marshall

those of you who are marine biologists or elderly Catholics. Those big guys you saw at those "B" South Seas movies when you were a kid, that were always clamping down on some fool swimmer's foot.

These are the same ones the Chinese have hunted nearly to extinction all over the Pacific for their aphrodisiac qualities and probably

somehow, so they started giant clam farms. To grow them as food ... or sexual aids ... or whatever.

Giant clams have a lot of advantages over raising other forms of livestock. For instance, you never have to worry about a herd of clams stampeding and knocking down the ranch house. Best of all, though, is you don't have to feed them anything.

clam farm in Mili started out.

Seems that about a year or so ago the folks at Robert Reimers Enterprises had a thought. How can we make even more money at this? How can we make it faster?

Robert Reimers is an old German trader who owns everything in the Marshall Islands from the Toyota dealership to the Ace Hardware franchise to Wau Island. And Reimers didn't get that way without a good nose for profit.

So, they thought, what if we could sell, say, 4-inch long giant clams that only take a few months to grow instead of the 4-foot long giant clams we've been waiting years for?

Who would buy them?

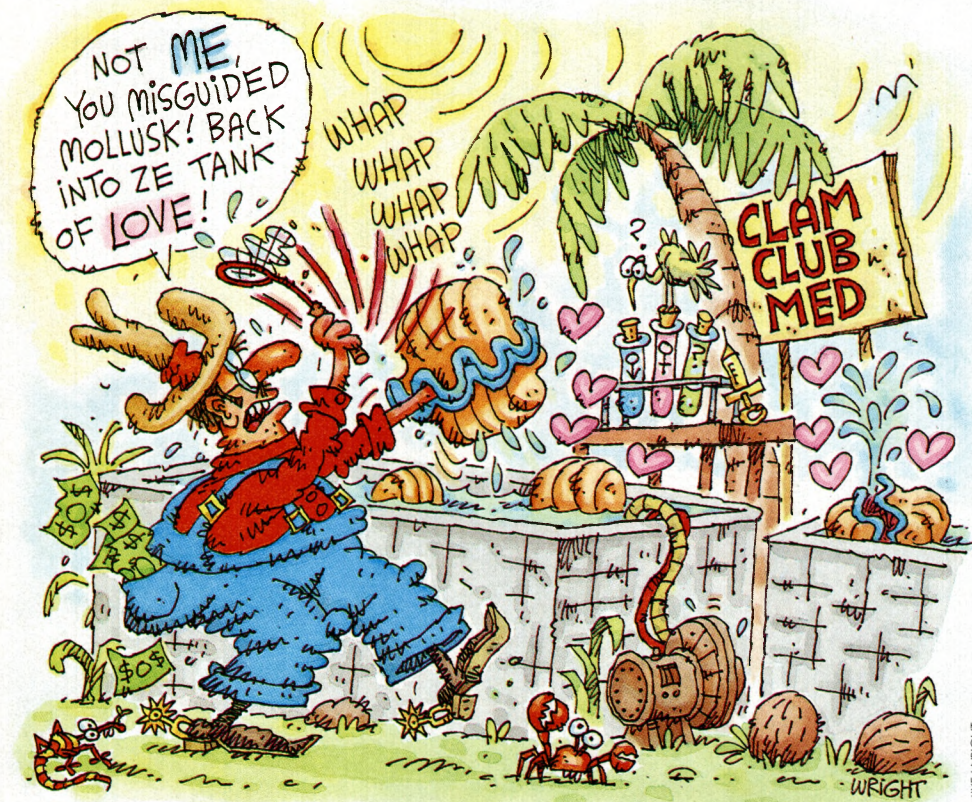
Americans. They'll buy anything.

But what would they use them for? Pets. Wouldn't be the strangest thing they ever took home.

(If you're not a saltwater aquarium owner, you'll just have to trust me on this. Before I took the pledge, I kept marine tanks for 15 years and the more exotic and more expensive the critter was, the more I wanted it. I gave it up only because they wouldn't let me set up my tank at the homeless shelter. And I would have sold my soul for a giant clam.)

At just about this time, along comes Bill Bridgeland and his wife Susan Tuller. And Bill has in his hand a brand-new — he hadn't even time to frame it — master's degree in aquaculture from Auburn University.

Now to most young couples, living alone on a 5-



Islands, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean ... and they're running a giant clam farm.

No the farm isn't very big at all; a few concrete tanks, some hoses and water pump and that's about it.

What's giant are the clams; *Tridactna maxima*, to

what's responsible for China's overpopulation problem.

A few years ago, some smart people in places like Papua New Guinea and Palau figured that with more and more Chinese and fewer and fewer *Tridactnas*, there must be a buck to made

They have this algae that lives on them, and all the algae needs to make it as happy (as, well, a clam) is sunlight. The algae emits this protein stuff and that's all *Tridactna* ever needs; algae poop. Clam chow.

And that's how the giant



BROADREACH

Does your teen want to get into diving? How's a three-week camp learning to dive in, say, Ra's Mohammed in the Red Sea? What's that? You want to go there? Well, give the kid a break and contact Broadreach, a summer adventure program offering a variety of programs in a variety of areas that will turn your teen onto the total marine environment. From a one-month voyage through the Lesser Antillies to a 20-day marine biology program in the Turks and Caicos to the Red Sea, they have a program worth looking into. Ages 13 to 19. Call them at 919-833-1907 for a brochure.

acre island that looks like a gnat dropping on the biggest map you can find wouldn't be too appealing.

But Bill and Sue, they'd both been Peace Corps workers on Yap, which is kind of, sort of, over there by Guam someplace. I've been to Yap. A plane I was on to somewhere else stopped there. Nothing I saw out the window made me even curious enough to want to get off and stroll around the tarmac.

Wau, to some folks, is wow. The supply boat shows up once a month and that's all the civilization some people seem to need. But apparently it's a great place to grow clams. Oh well.

So, Bill, how do you grow giant clams?

"Well, for pet clams, you want them with bright blue mantles — the skin around the edges. *Tridactna maxima* mantles come in two colors, brown or blue. And brown is boring in a fish tank, so we go for blue.

"Giant clams are her-

maphrodites, which means the same clam is both a boy and a girl.

"To start the ball rolling you get yourself a blue clam and shoot it with some hormones so its female side starts putting out eggs and then you scoop 'em up. Then you get another blue clam and shoot it with another hormone and you scoop up the sperm.

"Then you put them together and mix in a little algae and you'd think you'd be up to your armpits in clam larvae, but only 30 percent survive the first three days and only 15 percent of those make it to three months ... and only 60 percent of those are blue. But they were free in the first place. We just grabbed Mom and Dad out of the lagoon and put them in the breeding stock tank.

"Then you set the little clamlets (we're talking microscopic here) out in the sunlight in those concrete tanks and let photosynthesis and symbiosis take over."

When they get big enough, Robert Reimers Enterprises sells them for about \$6 a piece, which will be \$35 to \$55 by the time they get to your local shop.

Let's do a little clam math. At \$6 apiece with orders in hand for 10,000 clams a month, that's \$60,000 a month. And that's \$720,000 a year.

And you thought this was just a funny little story about a funny little business that no one could possibly take seriously, didn't you? — *Anthony Sommer*

Next time you're in the Marshall Islands, wander on over to Wau and watch the clams (and cash) grow. — *Anthony Sommer*

Recently the German government has voiced outrage over divers who have disturbed the remains of German sailors interred aboard the sunken U-boats 85 and 853 off Rhode Island and South Carolina. Apparently divers have been seen airlifting

IT'S A WAR GRAVE, STUPID!

BRADLEY SHEARD

debris from the subs' interiors in a search for souvenirs. The German government considers the subs "submerged war memorials" subject to U.S. desecration laws, and the U.S. supports the German claim. If the practice doesn't cease the Germans may petition to prohibit all diving on the subs. If we don't police ourselves the feds will be glad to help. — *Christopher C. Hugo*

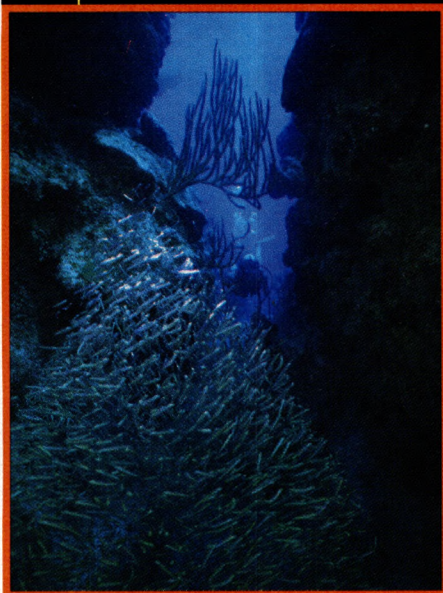
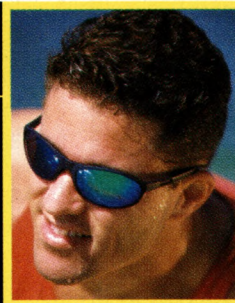
READER'S PHOTO

This photograph of a diver and a puffer fish was taken off Cayman Brac in the BWI by Patrick J. Kelly of Orland Park, Illinois. Patrick was shooting a Nikonos V with a 20-mm lens and used an Ikelite 150 strobe on half-power to light the scene. The photo was shot at f11 at 1/90 on Fuji Sensia 100 slide film. He titled the shot *Blue Eyes*.



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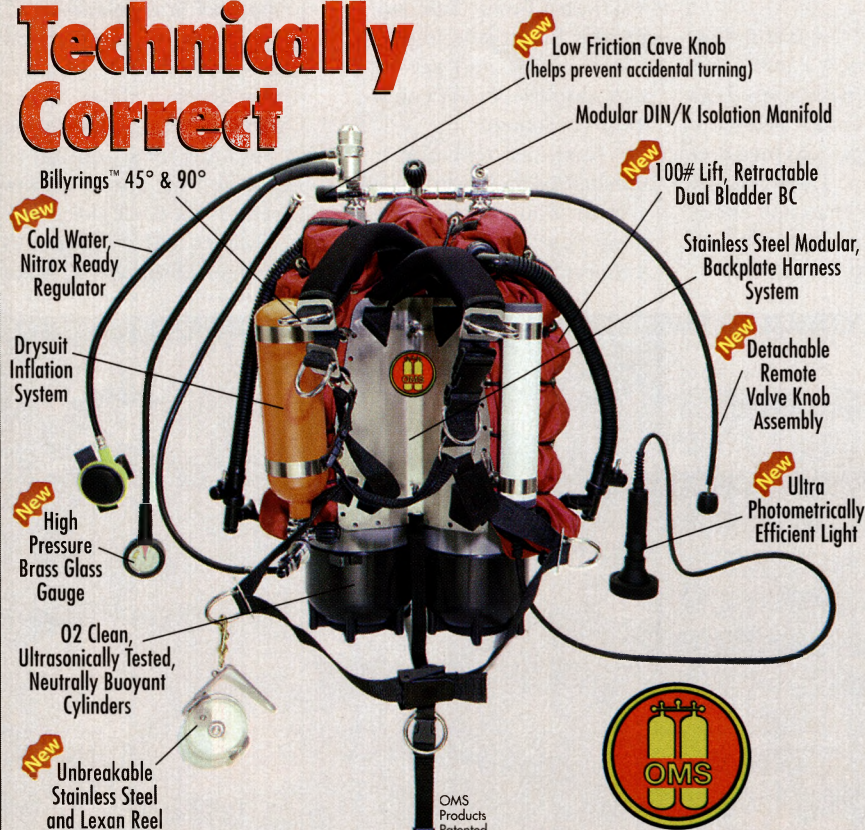
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EXPEDITIONING

In our November/December issue we featured a piece on what's really involved in becoming a marine biologist by Shane Paterson. Shane will be leading an Earthwatch expedition to New Guinea this summer to study the social behavior of barracuda in the area. Four nine-person teams will be involved in the 2-1/2 month study, and there will be opportunities for some rather interesting extracurricular diving as well. For more information contact Earthwatch at 800-776-0188; Web: <http://www.earthwatch.org>.

FIRST SEAL

While researching the Underwater Demolition Team article that appears on page 40 this month, I happened to get a chance to speak with Roy Boehm, the man who was responsible for forming the Navy's Sea Air Land (SEALs) unit. Roy formed the first SEAL team from members of his own UDT Team 21 back in 1963, and is quite a colorful character. Beyond being colorful, he has some extraordinary tales to tell, many of which no one has heard before. His book, *First Seal*, is due out in June from Simon and Schuster, and I guarantee it'll raise eyebrows. If you're at all interested in military special ops, diving, history, spies, etc., pick it up when you see it.

TREASURE HUNTING

J.W. Fisher, the manufacturer of underwater metal detectors, marine magnetometers, underwater camera systems, ROVs and side-scan sonar, has just launched a new Web site. You can obtain general information on its full line of products at <http://www.treasurenet.com/treasure/jwfishers/>. The e-mail address is JWFishers@aol.com.

MENSA DIVERS?

Okay, when I saw this one — *Dennis Graver's 100 Best Scuba Quizzes* — I figured, you gotta be kiddin'! Well, he wasn't and since I blew most of the questions I tried, I decided that perhaps I'd better actually go through the book and, er, learn something. The tests cover literally every aspect of diving, and the book is a great check-your-skills tool. Northern divers who are champing at the bit to get back under their home waters and who are suffering from a bit of cabin fever by now will especially appreciate it. From Aqua Quest Publications, 800-933-8989 or 516-759-0476.

PHOTO COMPETITION

The first World Open Underwater Photographic Competition will be held in the Turks and Caicos Islands this May. The event will last until September. The competition is open to amateur and professional photographers (they won't compete together) and will offer some \$10,000 in cash awards and up to \$50,000 in additional prizes. The top eight photos will be made into a commemorative set of Turks & Caicos stamps, and the following 12 will be published as a commemorative calendar. For more information, contact Ralph Higgs at the Turks & Caicos Tourist Board at 800-241-0824; e-mail: underphoto@terraport.net.

DO A GOOD DEED, DIVE THE CAYMAN'S

This from the pages of *The Caymanian Compass*. Seems Dan Santos, a volunteer fireman was driving over the Hudson River's Tappan Zee Bridge, north of New York City, when he saw a woman jump from the 135-foot span. Santos followed the woman, hitting the water at somewhere around 63 mph, knocked himself out briefly, badly bruised his right side and partially collapsed a lung. Then he saved the woman! The story was picked up by CNN and other national media, and Ron Kipp of Bob Soto's Diving on Grand Cayman saw it over breakfast, got hold of Santos and, along with several other Cayman businesses and Northwest Airlines, got Santos and two friends to the islands for nine days. Santos got to try a slightly milder form of "diving" while on GC ... he took a resort course and visited Stingray City. No word yet if our kind of "diving" interests him.

SMALL ENOUGH TO FIT ON HIS 150-FOOT YACHT

Got \$600,000 laying around doing nothing? Want to check out, say, the *Edmund Fitzgerald*, the *Lusitania* or the *Andrea Doria* and don't want to get wet? Then get hold of Pete Hoffman in Pompano Beach, Florida. Seems Pete has built his first commercial minisub for a gent who wants to go exploring and diving around the world but needed a sub to fit on his 150-foot boat. Hoffman's sub seats five, has a robotic arm, was

tested to American Bureau of Shipping standards, carries a 72-hour oxygen reserve and is certified to 1,000 feet. Our thanks to *Soundings* for informing us of this one!

HISTORICAL DIVER

If you've an interest in the historical aspect of our sport, you'll want to hook up with the Historical Diving Society USA. No special reason for joining other than it's really fun to know where all this

started. And surprising when you find out how far back it actually did. They can be contacted at Historical Diving Society, c/o 2022 Cliff Drive, #119, Santa Barbara, CA 93109; 805-962-3810. Individual membership is \$30.

HMMM

University of Florida biologist and shark expert George Burgess noted — in a press release dated November 13, 1996 — that the cooler temperatures of

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CALIFORNIA DIVING news



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winter that bring terrestrial snowbirds to the Sunshine State might also encourage white sharks to make the trip too. Well, seems like Burgess' crystal ball was working overtime. A monster white was caught inside the inner reef at John Pennekamp Park in Key Largo in January ... something locals say they can't recall happening before. Nice call, George. Now would you mind rethinking things and telling us what you think the stock market's gonna do in, say, March?

GOOD BOOKS

This is a neat one for the kids that's part story, part instructional, and it isn't a video. The book is called *Dreams of Dolphins Dancing* and it is written and illustrated by Joan Bourque. Based on a true encounter with a lone dolphin off the Lighthouse Reef Resort in Belize, it follows a young girl who befriends a dolphin and goes off in search of other dolphins. Nice watercolors illustrate the book and a workbook comes with it that directly applies to the conservation principles encountered in the book. A dollar from each book goes to one of three marine conservation organizations

(coupon included). For children ages 7-10, from Curtis Books, 520-634-6606. \$15.95.

North Atlantic divers — or those who've moved away and miss it —

TROPICAL PHOTO OP ... IN CHICAGO



We know the time is tight and this might fill up fast, but it's such a great idea we had to let you know. Want to learn — or refine — your underwater photo technique on a coral reef? Without leaving Chi-Town? The John G. Shedd Aquarium (1200 South Lake Shore Drive, 312-939-2426, ext. 3394), will be offering classroom and pool sessions with underwater photos Gary Chesnut and Greg Kent on March 1 and 2. The following weekend you'll get a chance to practice what you've learned by diving the aquarium's 90,000-gallon coral reef tank. Neat. To register, call the aquarium or contact Greg Kent at 815-233-0381.

won't want to miss Jonathan Bird's *Beneath the North Atlantic*. Nice, nearly-coffee-table-size book that really made me homesick for those good ol' cold northern waters. Great photography and plenty of interesting little facts about my once-home waters. Bird is president of the Oceanic Research Group, a non-profit environmental organization, and has contributed to *Sport Diver* on several occasions. It's \$39.95 from Tide-Mark Press; 800-338-2508.

Last but certainly not least is *Spearfishing and Underwater Hunting Handbook*, by B. Allen Patrick. As *SD* editor Pierce Hoover puts it: "I knew most of the stuff in it, but it took me five years to learn it the hard way." If you're interested in spearfishing at any level, push your learning curve and get a copy from Active Adventure Publishing; 813-827-0349. It's \$17.95.

FAUX PAS

The pictures of the polar bear, the belugas and whale that appeared in the "Trolling for Whales at the Arctic Circle" article that ran in the January/February issue was taken by Mike Macri of Sea North Tours (204-675-2195).

Also in our January/February issue we omitted the fact that SeaClusive Charters' *Playmate* has been running private, customized live-aboard charters to the Dry Tortugas for the past seven years. They can be reached at 305-872-3940; fax: 305-872-0111. We apologize for the omissions. — Gary P. Joyce

IT'S TOUGH GETTING YOUR WHOLE FAMILY TO AGREE ON ANYTHING...

Dad wanted to watch football, Mom wanted to go to the mall and the kids wanted to surf the net. Mom wanted to go to Cayman, Dad wanted to go to Bonaire. It's hard to get a family to agree on anything, except that Orca makes dive computers that, regardless of your diving experience, are easy to use and enjoy. Mom and Dad like the price, too!

Daughter (13 years old and just certified) likes simplicity of **ORCA'S MARATHON**. She has enough homework as it is, and didn't want to spend her vacation reading a manual written for some rocket scientist.

Teenage son (5 years diving experience) likes to spend time on his PC downloading all the great information that **ORCA'S PILOT** stores. His friends think that's the coolest. It's water activated so he doesn't forget to turn it on.

Mom (5-years diving experience, started with son) likes the big easy-to-read numbers and the simplicity of **ORCA'S PHOENIX**.

Dad (20 years diving experience) likes **ORCA'S PILOT EAN**. Enjoys ease of use and flexibility in adjusting computer for diving nitrox or air.

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Wreck Facts

German subs, the *Bluenose* and trying to find Avengers

Story by
Ellsworth Boyd

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A BOAT BEGETS A BEER

Leo Abernathy of the Maryland Hydro-nauts and Atlantis Rangers, along with Evie Dudas of Keystone Divers of West Chester, Pennsylvania, are singing the praise of the USS *Schurz*, a WWI German cruiser sunk off North Carolina. Confiscated from Germany, the 295-foot *Schurz* collided in 1918 with the tanker *Florida* and sank in 110 feet of water about 10 miles off Cape Lookout. Thousands of rounds of ammunition still lie on the bottom in the magazine area, while other parts of the wreck afford nooks and crannies for a vast variety of fish. Judy Gallagher, Kathy Erno, Lee Whaler and Dave Bluet, also with the groups, went on to visit the *Atlas*, a 90- to 130-foot-deep U-boat victim and the 90-foot-deep *Caribsea*, both torpedoed about the same time in 1942.

Keystoners Noreen Brown, Jim Lanbreth, Robert Falarra, Howard Mark and Suzie Dudas checked out the tanker *Papoose*, a U-124 victim, lying upside down in 120 feet of water. They also managed dives on the *Tamulipas* and *Aeolis* during their three-day wreck-diving adventure that afforded close to 100-foot visibility on several occasions. Evie Dudas says lobstering is still good on North Carolina wrecks, underwater photography opportunities are often excellent, and scootering around wrecks is becoming popular. If you're planning dives in the Tarheel State, now is the time to book.

Monte Wilson, stationed with our military forces in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, says he dove on a 140-foot sailboat, the *Bluenose*, wrecked in shallow water off the island. He wants more information on it.

Few wrecks are as fascinating as the *Bluenose*, a Canadian deep-sea fishing schooner built in 1921. Known as the ship that was saved by a postage stamp, it also helped name a Canadian beer. Cap-

tained by Angus Walters, the two-masted vessel came off a successful fishing season in the same year she was built to win an international sailing race for Nova Scotia.

Bluenose continued to race throughout the world for the next 10 years. Proceeds from a government-issued 50-cent commemorative stamp depicting the schooner under full sail helped save it from retirement. The captain and crew won their last international race



ELLSWORTH BOYD SHIPWRECK ARCHIVES

The original *Bluenose* (above) went down off Port-au-Prince in 1946. The *Bluenose II*, a replica of the schooner, sails as a goodwill ambassador of Nova Scotia today.

in 1938, when the fishing schooners were being replaced by large diesel trawlers. *Bluenose* retired from competition in 1939, but went on to entertain tourists — one of whom was Allen Ward of Ontario — on all-day excursions out of Halifax.

Idle at the docks for two years — 1941 and 1942 — she was sold to a Caribbean freight company and island-hopped for four years. In 1946, the still-majestic-looking ship struck a coral reef off Haiti and sank. The *Bluenose* was gone, but her memory lingered, especially in the heart of Allen Ward.

In 1954, a Canadian brewery commissioned the advertising agency where Ward worked to design a label for their lager beer. He toyed with a lot of names, but couldn't find anything catchy. Ward was ready to chuck the project when he spotted the 50-

cent *Bluenose* stamp while sorting through a box of junk. The picture set off memories of his grandfather talking about drinking "schooners" of beer in the good old days, and thus Schooner Beer was born.

Captain Walters died in 1968 at age 87, but lived long enough to sail aboard *Bluenose II*, a recreation of the *Bluenose* that has gone on to become a goodwill ambassador for Nova Scotia.

Darren McPhail says he explored the remains of the Charles S. Price sunk in Lake Huron, and now he's researching shipwrecks in Lake Erie. He's especially interested in a whale-back freighter sunk in the vicinity of the Peel Passage.

It's difficult to trace a wreck without knowing its name. There are however, 15 Lake Erie wrecks listed in *Diving and Snorkeling Guide to the Great Lakes*, by Kathy Johnson and Greg Lashbrook. There's also a brochure of books about the Great Lakes available from Fresh Water Press of Cleveland, Ohio. Charles and Jeri Feltner of Dearborn, Michigan, published an excellent book in 1982, *Great Lakes Maritime History: Bibliography and Sources of Information*, that lists maps, charts and books on Lake Erie. *Great Lakes Shipwrecks and Survivals*, by William Ratigan, is another good source. Fred Stonehouse has written many books on the Great Lakes, as have others.

Wayne Giesche of St. Charles, Illinois, is interested in searching for sunken Avenger airplanes from WWII and wants to know how to locate them.

I'm not sure where to tell you to look in your area, Wayne, but I can give you some good leads. First, contact maritime attorney Peter Hess in Wilmington, Delaware, who's defending some divers who found an Avenger. They strongly disagree with the Navy, which claims it still owns the salvage rights.

Next, contact Peter Theopanis of Jupiter, Florida. Peter also found an Avenger and has conducted research on them. He too is fighting the Navy over the salvage rights. To conduct your own study, search through microfilm in the history and marine room of the Milwaukee Public Library. You will also want to contact the curator of the Navy Museum in Washington, D.C. Another good source might be the Great Lakes Historical Society in Vermilion, Ohio.

Michael Judy of Orlando, Florida, is interested in shipwrecked galleons off the east coast of Florida and the Florida Keys. He wants to know if there are any

treasure-laden ships that haven't been found and where he can find out about them.

Yes, there are plenty ... and almost as many books written about them as there are ships out there. Start in your local library under author Robert Marx; he has a half-dozen books on the Spanish wrecks. John Potter's *Treasure Diver's Guide* is a good one, and so are books by Robert Burgess and Carl Clausen. Steve Singer's *Shipwrecks of Florida* has many listed in the areas you're interested in. As far as purchasing treasure books, you'll find some of them out of print.

Carl McManus of Titusville, Florida, is trying to locate the remains of the John H. McManus, a 111-ton, 88-foot two-masted Boston fishing schooner built in 1885. Carl believes it was lost somewhere off Cape Cod after retiring as a fisher and becoming a trading ship.

All I found was one small reference in the *Encyclopedia of American Shipwrecks*: "John H. McManus, schooner, sunk 1889, cause unknown, place — Cape Cod, Mass." Your best bet, Carl, would be a good library with adequate microfilm of newspapers going back to that time. Also, write the curator of Peabody Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, and ask for information on the vessel. A letter to the editor of the *National Fisherman*, Camden, Maine, might draw reactions from some of its readers who know a lot about wrecks of old fishing vessels.

Janet Anderson from Salem, Oregon, asks if any of the survivors of the Titanic are still alive.

The iceberg collision of 1912 killed one-third of the passengers and crew, leaving little more than 1,500 survivors. Figures from 1996 reveal eight still living; three in the U.S., the others in England and France. The oldest, Edith Brown Haisman, will celebrate her 100th birthday this year.

Terri and Ed Evans of Minneapolis, Minnesota, asked about the "exhibition in Chicago" I mentioned in a previous *Wreck Facts*.

It's the annual Our World Underwater show, usually held around mid-April. For details write: OWU, PO Box 6865, Rockford, IL 61125; 312-666-6525; fax: 815-398-0219.

Send your questions and comments to Ellsworth Boyd, 1120 Bernoudy Road, White Hall, MD 21161. Enclose an SASE for a reply. E-mail is sportdiver@worldzine.com.

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Leading Edge

In difficult situations, breath control can help you keep it together

IN CONTROL

By Tom Mount

PROPER
BREATH
CONTROL
CAN ALLEVI-
ATE THE
DEBILITAT-
ING EFFECTS
OF STRESS
AND FEAR IN
THE DIVER

For most people, breathing is like driving a car with cruise control. No matter what else we're thinking about, the rhythm of inhalation and exhalation continues. But if we choose to, we can override our body's "cruise control" and make conscious changes to our breathing rate and pattern.

Changes to the breathing pattern can result in both physical and psychological changes. Divers who are aware of these changes can correct problems the underwater environment creates for the respiratory process, and can use breath control to alleviate the debilitating effects of stress or fear.

Breath control has been the subject of many books and lectures, and forms a vital part of many martial arts, meditation and worship programs. It would be impossible to cover all aspects of the subject in a single column, so at this time we will confine our discussion to a few specific facts that are of concern to all divers, and of particular interest to technical divers.

MINIMIZING BREATHING RESISTANCE

— Each time you inhale or exhale, air moves through the airways of your throat, trachea and lungs. This moving air meets frictional resistance from the walls of the airway. The more shallow and rapid your breathing, the greater the resistance, as the air molecules literally bounce off the walls of the airways.

Increased breathing resistance reduces the exchange of fresh and stale air in the lungs, and may lead to hyperventilation as the nervous system reacts to the sensation of air starvation by increasing your

breathing rate. This pattern, if left unchecked, may create stress, hyperventilation and ultimately panic.

To avoid this reaction, you must train yourself to inhale and exhale slowly and deeply. Slow, complete inhalations and exhalations will produce less turbulence and allow more fresh gas to actually reach the lungs, rather than become trapped in the windpipe.

Breath control becomes increasingly important as depth increases. As you go deeper, your breathing gas — be it air or some other mixture — will increase in density. The body's reflex action to increasing gas density is to breathe faster, which produces turbulence in the airways. To compensate, you must consciously alter your breathing pattern to maintain a slow, measured breathing pace as depth increases.

BREATHING AND STRESS — Just as an increased breathing rate can cause stress, a conscious reduction in breathing rate may help reduce stress.

Your autonomic nervous system (ANS) regulates the body's involuntary functions, including the heartbeat. It has been proven, however, that changes in the breathing rate can affect

the heart rate and other elements of the ANS. Thus, by consciously altering our breathing pattern, we can gain control over many of our so-called involuntary responses to stress, fear and danger.

BREATHING AND SWIM PACE — Along with breath control, divers should develop an awareness of and control over their swim pace. During the dive, you should establish a swim pace that balances speed with your ability to maintain a slow, deep



BILL DOOLEY

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For more information RSVP #52

breathing pattern. Swimming faster than this pace is inefficient, as it alters your breathing pattern, increases breathing resistance and decreases gas transfer within the lungs.

Frequently divers will accelerate their swim pace under stress, which may lead to a loss of breathing control. Conversely, divers in an air-sharing situation tend to slow their pace, which could leave them with insufficient gas to reach the surface. The solution is to make a conscious effort to maintain a normal

swim pace combined with a controlled breathing rate.

SMOKING AND DIVING — In addition to the well-publicized dangers of lung cancer, smoking creates additional problems for the diver. Smoking causes the heart to work harder, which results in a higher pulse rate and an increase in blood pressure. Blood flow is decreased due to constriction of the blood vessels. This eventually predisposes one to heart disease, but more immediately makes a diver more prone to decompression sick-

ness, as it reduces circulatory efficiency. Smoking also creates a reaction that causes a drop in body temperature.

One additional diving-related risk produced by smoking is the possibility of mucus plugs in the lungs behaving like gas bubbles. In addition, these plugs form a base for bubble attachment, and may interfere with the lung's natural filtering process. In addition, the congestion and alveoli damage associated with smoking put divers at a higher risk of pulmonary barotrauma.

BENEFITS OF EXERCISE — Regular exercise benefits the respiratory system by producing healthier lungs. Healthy lungs in turn provide better ventilation.

The in-shape diver's VO_2 max, which is the ability to utilize oxygen efficiently, is higher than that of a non-fit counterpart. This increased VO_2 max allows the conditioned diver to work harder without a dramatic increase in breathing rate. In life-threatening situations, this respiratory efficiency may prove to be the dividing line between survival and failure.

The more intense your aerobic program, the better the VO_2 development. The Tour de France cyclists have among the highest VO_2 max of all athletes. It is this high pulmonary efficiency that allows them to perform well on a long endurance race, day after day. A diver who needs endurance to swim a given distance, to assist another diver or to get out of a bad situation will be more prone to success if he's in good physical condition.

OTHER BENEFITS — You may find that the study and practice of breath control will not only enhance your performance and safety underwater, but may also provide you with increased healing powers and greater resistance to diseases.

Perhaps an even greater discovery is that through correct breathing, you control the right side of your brain and the ability to control your mind. It is thought that many diseases are due to an imbalance in energy, caused by improper breathing, stress and negative mental states.

Regardless of your personal belief system, and of your acceptance or rejection of the wider practices of breath control, you should at the very least become aware of how your breathing pattern affects your performance and mental attitude while diving, and of how you can alter your state of mind and your physiology by simply taking slow, deep breaths in times of stress.



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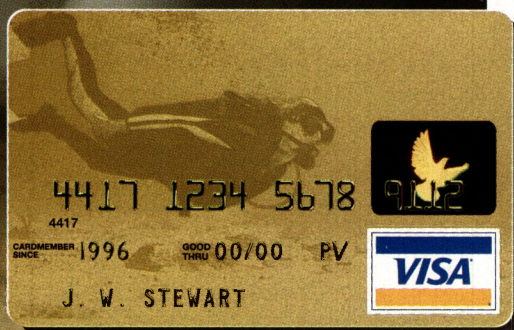
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Photo Op.

The object of good photography is to evoke emotion and create a reaction in the viewer

Story and Photo
by Mike Hurley

THE VIEWER
MAY HATE A
PICTURE OR
WHAT IT
SAYS, BUT
EVEN THEN
THE COMPOS-
ER HAS DONE
HIS JOB

PHOTO SYNTHESIS

When we go on vacation we take pictures, but pro photographers don't take pictures, they make images — images that instantly grab you, that make you want to be in the picture, that make you feel happy or sad, or scared or mad. The thread between great images is that they always evoke an emotion.

As you compose your image you need to take into account a little more than a simple mechanical guideline like the Rule of Thirds.

I believe we are all essentially products of our environment — I mean in the terra firma sense rather than geographically. It is often uncomfortable to view images that do not follow our own physical limitations, such as the force of gravity. Fish and marine creatures, for example, are comfortable swimming up, down, sideways or whatever in their weightless world. For us, these positions are unnatural. It doesn't feel right to see images where the fish are not somewhat parallel to the bottom. It's important to portray this different world in a way that we, as terrestrial beings, can relate to. As another example, since we don't fly it's not normal for us to view everything from above. So, as a rule, it's a no-no to shoot down on things as you swim over them. Walls are unfamiliar too; viewers will want to turn the image so the "ground" is at the bottom unless you actually tell them that it was shot on a wall, or you orient something next to the wall that is familiar enough to make them feel at ease with the earth going up the side of the shot. Simply stated, in order to make the viewer feel comfortable, you must present the image from a point of view that we as land-based creatures are used to.

CREATING IMPACT — Simply by placing your subject in different areas of the frame you can elicit different reactions. Say you place your subject at the far left section of the frame and he's facing left. Automatically the subject is perceived as leaving, and you don't know where he's off to because you can't see

any more of the scene. This causes the viewer to question and wonder; the negative space feels empty and somehow uncomfortable. By facing the subject to the right he's moving into the scene, we can see where he's headed, we know the outcome; the negative space has value and he becomes familiar — comfortable. But that's still not enough.

The way you choose to create your image's impact can also be a factor in what emotions you stir. The impact may be in the form of an unusual subject, or subjects doing the unexpected, or it can be as simple as colors that you don't normally see



A common mistake made when shooting small subjects on difficult surfaces — like this sea whip — is to shoot straight down. Shoot from the subject's level and make eye contact, relating the viewer to the subject.

together. Colors also create subconscious or conscious feelings. Blues and greens are cool, cold or fresh. Reds, yellows and oranges are warm, hot or racy. Mix the two and you have instant impact. Top-side images combining warm and cold colors are very effective but hard to achieve. Imagine a field of Arctic icebergs in a blue sea and a darkening sky. Add a fiery setting sun with hues of red and yellow mingling overhead, and wow! Underwater, we have it easy — the cobalt blue of the water's surface as viewed from below makes the most stunning background an artist could hope for, and the rest of the

spectrum is there for the taking.

In photographing a live subject, you need to provide the viewer some sort of physical connection, and for us, again living within our earth-bound perspective, the connection is unquestionably eye contact. We must see the eyes. A creature's eyes will tell us if he's happy or sad, evil or good, devious or trustworthy. We can see agony, we can see delirium, we will relate and feel what our subject feels. Remember the photographs with the baby fur seals? With fish, expression is a little harder to communicate, but nonetheless we must be able to see the eyes. When you're focusing on your subject, an eye is the primary target.

Good images will often tell a story or cause the viewer to create his own story. Careful placement of elements within the frame will define the story. As a rule, shots of fish tails won't make the best documentary pictures, but a couple of my favorite images involve a diver swimming away from the camera apparently unaware that she's being followed by a fish or a shark. The fish looks like a lost child following his adopted mama. The shark puts the diver in unknown peril and makes the viewer want to warn the diver.

Leading lines into and away from the subject's path lend to the perception we get as we look at the image and create the story. A leading line can be anything that starts at the most obvious portion of the image (usually the bottom) and carries you to, or even beyond, the main subject which may be only a small percentage of the image. Leading lines can be either real or perceived and can be so effective they can of themselves be a means to an end with no real subject matter.

Here's where my personal photography gets a little anal-retentive. The ocean is an asymmetrical world, rather chaotic in nature. One of my favorite things to do in underwater photography is to throw in as much symmetry as possible. (Remember that part of impact is to portray the unexpected.) Repeating shapes, backgrounds with patterns or solid colors, fish in formation. I stay away from cluttered scenes (there's a difference between clutter and detail) and crop out unruly algae and corals. I like to shoot pairs of fish — it gives that happy, monogamous-couple feeling. I also like to use S curves and stay away from directly vertical or horizontal lines, especially with divers.

THE WHOLE PICTURE — Something we must train ourselves to do when we begin to take photography seriously is to see the entire frame. Most of us look at the subject, slam it in the middle so we don't chop off a head, and — bang — close the shutter. We get the pictures back from K-Mart and ... who are those tiny figures huddled together in the center of the picture?

A stunning image is not just the subject, it's the entire frame. Each portion of the photo must add to the overall impression. If it doesn't, it shouldn't be there. Look through the viewfinder and imagine a tiny piece of art hanging on your wall. Look at the top, the bottom. Look into the corners. Are there shadows, an unwanted stick or maybe a fin ... (maybe your fin)? Move back and forth, left, right, up, down; how best can you convey what this subject means to you? Does each and every portion in that frame add to the image? This part takes a lot of practice — when you see your very first whale shark, are you going to think about what's in the corner of your viewfinder frame? I didn't even lift the camera to my eye!

TO PLAN OR NOT TO PLAN — I've heard over and over again that you will achieve better results if you know what you're after before you get into the water. I personally don't think that kind of planning is always necessary. But don't shoot at everything you see. Know what you like and wait for the moment. If a worthy subject doesn't present itself, don't shoot anything. On the other hand, some planning doesn't hurt either. You won't have much luck shooting manta rays in Lake Michigan. Often I plan my trips around a certain subject and study its habits and habitat. For example, an octopus den can sometimes be spotted by the mound of shells just outside the opening. I know what I'm after but I don't predetermine composition. Other times I just want to visit a certain region. I'll pick up a book on the area to find out what may interest me and where to find it. But basically I follow the "human rules" mentioned above and remember that artistic rules are meant to be broken. Remember, those excellent, astonishing images shot by the guys we all wish to emulate are never an accident or luck, and they always evoke in us an emotion. ■

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Prince Albert Robinson floats motionless in the clear water, face down. Except for the slow, deliberate expansions and contractions of his chest, he might be mistaken for a corpse.

Minutes pass. Then, without prelude, he doubles over, extends one arm forward, kicks twice and sinks toward the edge of the wall, 100 feet below.

He glides to photographer Kim Stanberry, who is positioned near a coral head at 60 feet. A minute passes while pictures are taken, then Robinson turns and fins ever so gently down the coral slope to the edge of the wall. I meet him at 110 feet, ready to pass off my spare second-stage regulator. He shakes his head, gives the OK sign, performs a slow visual sweep of the surrounding ocean, then begins an equally slow return to the surface, where he will take his first breath in almost three minutes.

Stanberry and I are on the remote island of South Caicos to document Robinson and other

divers involved in one of the Caribbean's last remaining breath-hold fisheries. Unlike the majority of native lobstermen and spearfishermen, who have turned to tanks and hookah rigs for underwater harvesting, a dwindling number of divers in Cuba, the Dominican Republic and the Caicos Islands hold to the old ways of breath-hold diving.

These "old ways" have become the stuff of diving myth. We've all heard the story of the native boy who free-dives amazingly deep and stays and stays and stays.

After years of listening to such tales, I wanted numbers — and answers. How deep is "real deep"? How long is a "long time"? Do these divers know secret deep diving techniques? Could I learn them?

Story by Pierce
Hoover

And so began a three-year investigation that would bring me in contact with some of the world's best free divers, draw me into the ultra-dangerous realm of no-limits diving, expand my personal abilities fivefold and, ultimately

JIM EDDY

On a Sing



le Breath

provide answers that contained as much mysticism as science.

FISH BORN DOWN THERE

Once the day's catch is unloaded, the skiff moored and the family fed, Prince Albert Robinson is free to join us for a taste of Haitian rum at Mrs. Trudy's, a closet-size tavern on a dusty side street in Cockburn Harbour.

Physically unremarkable, with a slight pot belly, there is nothing about his person that hints at Prince's amazing diving abilities. But

in the fishing hierarchy of South Caicos Island, Prince is a king.

While divers of lesser ability work the shallows and grass flats in search of conch, Prince and an elite few others take their boats to the edge of the wall, where they pursue the lobster and big fish that lurk in these deeper, less accessible waters. The challenge for these hunters is not merely to reach depths of up to 100 feet on a breath-hold dive, but to hunt for periods of up to 3 minutes at that depth, then wrestle their catch to the surface.

Knowing that free-diving great Jacques Mayol has frequented South Caicos for years, I ask Prince if he learned deep diving techniques from the legendary Frenchman.

"We all know about him, but I've never dove with him," Prince tells me. "My cousin got me started, then I taught myself deep diving when I was 15. Now, it seems like I do better deep than shallow. I feel so totally relaxed when I'm in the water, there's no place I'd rather be."

Like most novices, I am obsessed with depth and time. I



GREG JOHNSTON

have already seen Prince reach 110 feet, and I wonder how much deeper he can dive, and for how long?

"A ways deeper than we went today," he replies, "but I don't often do it, because I don't have enough time left for fishing. I typically stay on top of the ledge, or right on the edge [a depth of 60 to 80 feet]. I can't tell you exactly how long, cause I don't watch the clock, but I can tell you that if it's just playing around like today, I can't last so long, but if there's a fish to be caught, I do a lot better."

"I get real calm when I'm deep, but you still got to be careful," he warns. "A lot of fellas around here push it too hard and pass out. If the boatman doesn't grab them and shake them good, they sink and drown."

Had this ever happened to Prince?

"One time years ago, I was hooking lobster really deep," he says. "I got the first two, but the third one kept getting away. All of a sudden, it felt like my whole body just collapsed. But I didn't freak, I stayed calm and started swimming up, keeping it slow. Just near the surface, my world went black, and the next thing I remember was hitting my head on the boat."

"That taught me to respect my limits. You can't overstay your time. Fish was born down there, you weren't."

DIVING LESSONS

I left South Caicos with a new awareness of human diving potential, but without answers to many other questions. Is deep diving a rare ability that divers like Prince develop through trial and error? Or do all humans have a latent ability to breath-hold dive and, if so, can free diving be taught?

The first lessons come from an unexpected source. During a mixed-gas diving seminar, veteran technical instructor Tom Mount mentioned that he had taught hundreds of people to extend their free-diving abilities dramatically by focusing on sur-

face breathing techniques and swimming posture.

"Do at least two minutes of slow, deep breathing on the surface: 10 seconds in, ten seconds out, while keeping your mind clear and your body relaxed. If you want to hyperventilate before submerging, limit yourself to three quick breaths,"



The danger in free diving is greatest for intermediate and advancing divers.

he coaches. "Any more could cause physiological problems during the dive, and will break your pattern of relaxation."

"Descend with slow easy kicks, almost free falling, and stay relaxed. Tuck your chin to reduce pressure on the thorax — which could cause a gag reflex — and ascend with a slow rocking kick. The more you want air, the slower you should go."

The key to avoiding shallow-water blackout is to limit bottom time, effort and ascent rate, Mount says. "Your first need for air is psychological, but if you give in to the flight instinct and rush to the surface, you will deplete your remaining oxygen supply and put yourself in greater danger of blackout."

"Work in two-man teams," he says, "allow two minutes or more for surface recovery, and limit dives to 90 feet for 90 seconds."

At the time, Mount's suggested limits seem ludicrously unobtain-

able. But over the course of a summer, I used his methods to make dramatic increases in my free-diving abilities, and was soon pushing and even exceeding those limits.

On a dive trip to Bonaire, I found myself diving repeatedly to depths to and beyond 100 feet, often for more than 90 seconds. It was

quite an ego boost to drop in on scuba divers, but by doing it solo, and with an incomplete understanding of the changes my body was undergoing, I unknowingly put myself at great risk.

DEEP TROUBLE

Two months later, reality came calling during a dive trip to the British Virgin Islands. A South African dive master wanted to free-dive the wreck of the *Rhone*. Having listened to his tales of breath-hold spearfishing at depths of 140 feet, I assumed my companion was an expert. My log book tells the story:

"After a few warm-up dives, I kick down to the bow of the wreck at 65 feet, then swim through the hull and down to the sand at 80. I am lulled by a slight sense of narcosis, and absorbed by the details of the wreck. Two minutes pass before I feel the need to breathe."

"Then I look up, and the surface suddenly seems very far away. I feel the onset of panic. Then I somehow recall Mount's instructions, resist the urge to bolt for the surface, and concentrate on staying conscious as I fin slowly upward.

"I see red spots as I break the surface, and know I am done for the day ... and lucky to be alive.

"Meanwhile, the dive master has made four unsuccessful attempts to reach the wreck. He hyperventilates, submerges, and tries again.

"Watching from the surface, I see him stop 10 feet above the wreck, hesitate, then force himself downward until he touches the hull. He turns immediately and begins kicking vigorously for the surface.

"Through 60 feet of water, I can see that he is in trouble. I grab two quick breaths, submerge and intercept him at 25 feet. He flies past, scarcely aware of my presence, then stops suddenly at 10 feet and begins to sink slowly. The body is limp when I grab it and wrestle it to the surface. Long forgotten life-saving skills are remembered, I perform in-water mouth-to-mouth, and he comes back."

Later, I learned that this particular dive master was known locally for bragging about his free-diving abilities, but never actually dived past 60 feet. I had unknowingly called his bluff, and his ego

In a phone conversation, I asked Maas to share his thoughts on free diving, based on his 38 years in the sport.

We began with my supposition that anyone could learn to free-dive, that it is some type of latent ability humans share with other mammals.

Not totally true, Maas tells me. "Free diving is not something that everyone should or can do. There are both psychological and physiological blocks to free diving."

First, he says, there's claustrophobia, which can limit diver performance, and in more extreme cases may prevent some individuals from even submerging their heads. Low-level claustrophobia may be exacerbated by dark, turbid water, fear of the unknown and by the need to wear a wetsuit. "Three-quarters of the world's diving requires a wetsuit, and that can be a significant block to many people," Maas says.

And then there are physiological blocks, the primary one being the inability to clear the ears, he says. "The problem is more acute than with scuba diving, because the free diver must clear many times an hour."

OK, I concede, limiting factors do exist, but what of the studies that show even novice divers will experience a slowing of the heart when submerged, often accompanied by a blood shift from the extremities to



GREG JOHNSTON

Depth is less important than the amount of time a free diver spends submerged.

responded with almost fatal results.

DEFINING THE LIMITS

Clearly, it was time for me to learn more about the dangers of free diving, and of the realities of human potentials and limits. I pored over all available literature and found some of the most practical and concise layman's descriptions of free-diving physiology in the book *Blue Water Hunting and Freediving*, by Terry Maas.

the torso. Problem cases aside, are humans diving mammals?

"If they don't have any of the problems we mentioned, the average person can do remarkable things," Maas replies.

I tell him of my recent experiences, which prompts a somewhat unexpected answer.

"I don't think focusing on depth is the way to go," he cautions. "Most sea life is found in top 30 feet of the ocean, especially the pelagic

species. Most anyone who dives is capable of reaching these depths, and that's where the most spectacular sights are. I've ridden manta rays, seen whale sharks, hunted tuna ... all at less than 30 feet."

Maas also considers depth less important than the amount of time a free diver spends submerged — and not just during a single dive. He timed himself a couple of years ago, he says, and during a three-hour free-diving session, he spent 40



Focusing on depth isn't necessarily the way to go since most sea life is found in the top 30 feet of the ocean.

minutes of each hour submerged.

Any tips on training? I ask.

"The best training is to go free diving. Join a club or buddy up with an experienced free diver. In a week or two, most people will begin to see daily increases in their performance."

Any words of caution?

"Beginners don't usually go deep enough or stay long enough to get in trouble. The danger is greatest for intermediate and advancing divers, especially young, competitive males."

The learning and physical adaptation curves seem to be fairly quick,

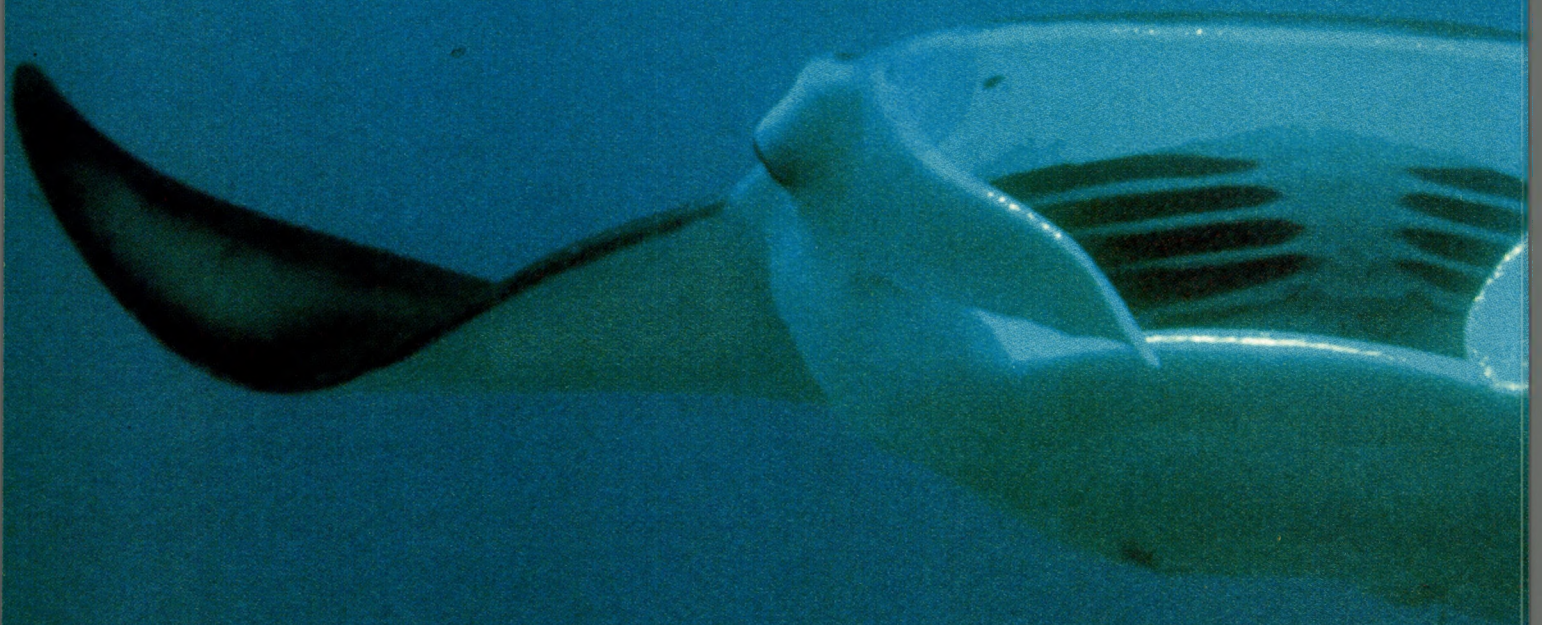
Maas says, which can lead some divers to an intoxicating desire to push deeper and deeper. But these same divers often have little or no awareness of their personal limits or of the dangers involved.

"Do the research first and understand what you are getting into," he counsels. "There's no sense in pushing the limits. The 90 seconds you mentioned is a long, beautiful dive, and if you can do that, you are as fine a free diver as most people could ever hope to be."

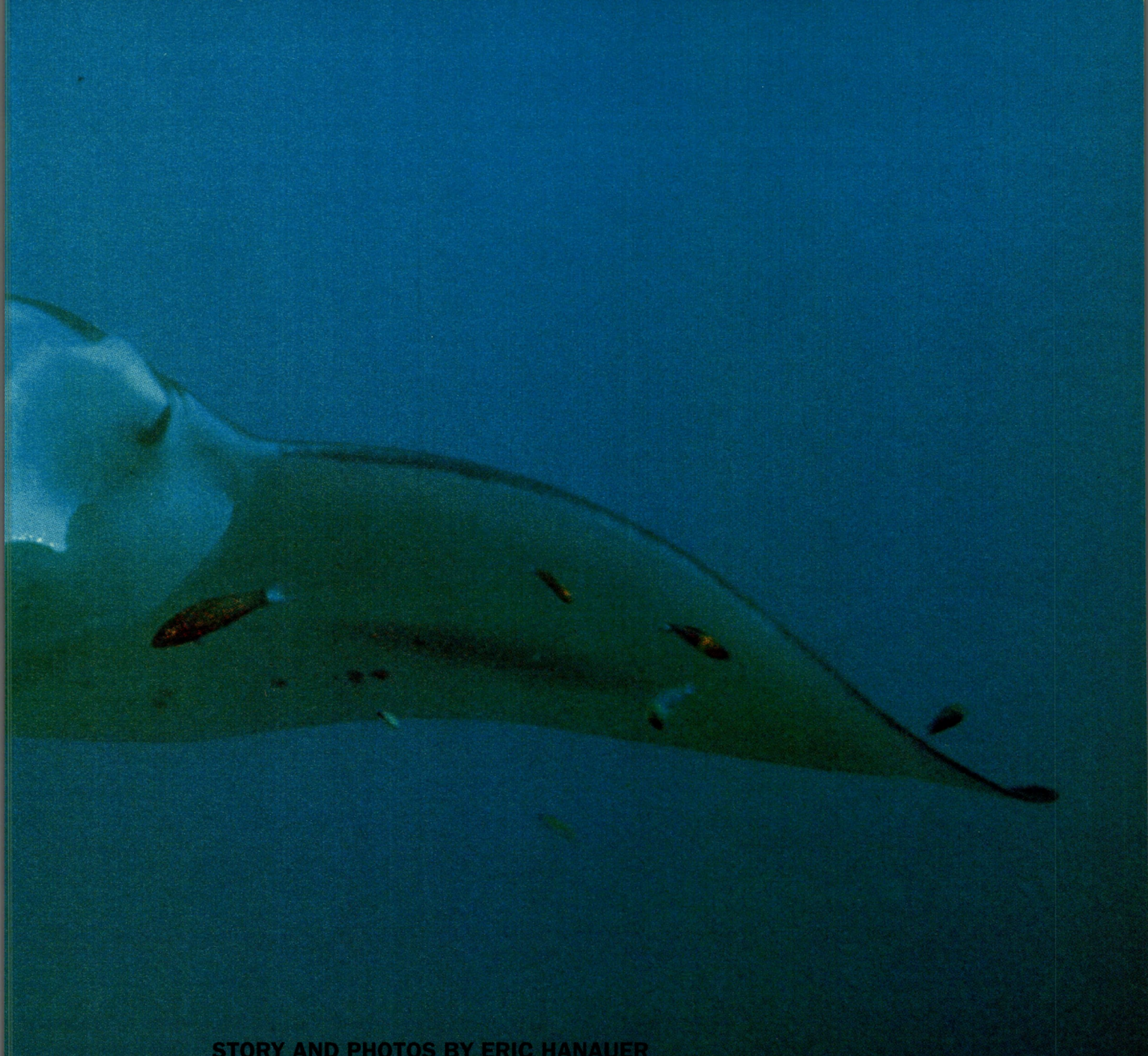
It was solid, rational advice, tempered by decades of experience, the loss of friends and the realities

of the unforgiving ocean environment. Today I would give similar advice to any neophyte free diver. But at the time, it wasn't enough. I wanted to plumb the depths of my personal ocean, regardless of the consequences. 

In Part Two, author Pierce Hoover will attempt a 200-foot "no limits" dive with world-record holder Pipin Ferreras, learn of the spiritual aspects of free diving from legendary diver Jacques Mayol, and meet a self-trained master hunter who seems to displace time and depth to become part of the ocean itself.



MA



STORY AND PHOTOS BY ERIC HANAUER

Manta rays are difficult critters to study. Unlike sea urchins, abalones and barnacles, they don't stay in one place very long, so it's hard to prod them, poke them, count them and be secure in the knowledge that the same individuals will be in the same place the next time you come to survey. Therefore it's not difficult to understand why scientists don't know a lot about these animals compared to sessile creatures.



Nobody has spent more actual water time with mantas than the dive guides at locations where their comings and goings are fairly predictable. Two such places are Yap State in Micronesia and San Benedicto Island in Mexico's Revilligigedos Archipelago. The knowledge of these guides may never be written up in scientific journals, but their observations on habits and behavior, gleaned from daily experience in all seasons and all water conditions, qualify them for Ph.D.s in manta studies. When they talk mantas, everybody ought to listen.

During several trips to both locations, I interviewed these guides for their insights and opinions. Our panel

of experts included Rafael Cervantes and Scott Sundby of the *Solmar V* from Cabo San Lucas, Leo Ragman and Bill Acker of Yap Divers, and Jesse Faimaw of Yap's Beyond the Reef. The interviews took place over a period of four years, and in locations 7,500 miles apart, but through the magic of literary license we'll seat our experts around a virtual table and listen to their discussion. They won't always agree, even guides at the same location, but that's part of the manta mystique.

GENERAL BEHAVIOR

How are guides always able to spot incoming mantas before the tourists do?

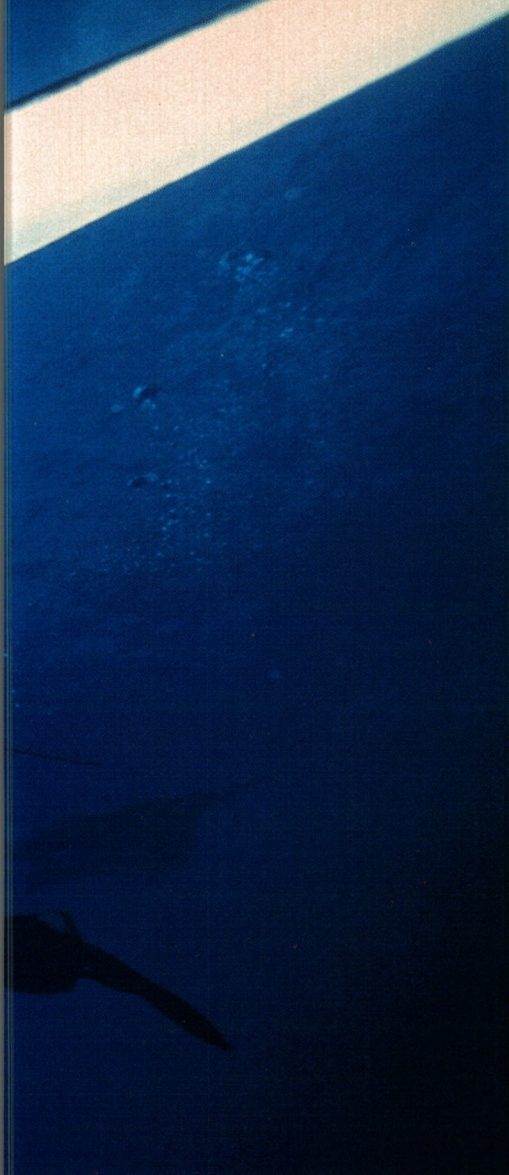
Jesse: The key thing is to look in all directions. Leo always sees them about 10 to 15 seconds before I do; he can smell the mantas.

Leo: It's not that I really know where they're coming from. What I see first is the white of their wings and cephalic fins. On a morning outgoing tide, I watch outside the channel. Usually they're swimming into the current unless it's very weak.

How can you tell males from females?

Rafael: Males have a crest on the chest; the sternum protrudes more, and the claspers (the structures in the genital area used for mating) are bigger. You also can tell their age by the

WE CAN TELL IF AN ANIMAL IS GONE FOR IT'S ALL IN HOW FAST HE TAKES OFF.



area around their eyes. It's smooth among the younger ones; the eyes look clearer.

What is the relationship between the remoras and the mantas?

Scott: Remoras receive free transportation with no energy expended. Maybe the manta takes them to areas of food that they can use. By the way, I've been bitten by a remora; so watch out.

Rafael: Scars on the mantas that look like tennis-shoe footprints are from the remoras' suckers. Sometimes they're bleeding. But when I watch the remoras move to another spot, there is usually no mark left.

FEEDING

San Benedicto is primarily a cleaning station. In Yap, both cleaning and feeding take place, although cleaning seems to be the primary activity.

Rafael: I've seen them feed, but only at the anchorage, not at the Boiler (where the diving encounters occur).

Jesse: One hour before high tide, at the last of the incoming tide when the current is not too strong, mantas move in to feed. As the tide begins to go out and plankton moves out of the mangrove areas, their numbers increase.

Bill: Mid-tide is their environment. When mantas are flapping their wings even slowly, you can bet there is a huge current. At mid-tide they are sitting there very happily, with tons and tons of water bringing them plankton. But the current at that time is too strong for divers to hang on. That's why we dive just before slack tide.

Leo: On an incoming tide, you can really see the plankton in clear water. It's orange or pink. I've seen the rays excrete a large cloud of something from gill slits — we call it vomiting for lack of something better. It comes out like a big pink cloud. When I first saw it fall to the bottom, I went there to see what it was, and it's just small shrimp.

CLEANING

At San Benedicto, angelfish man the cleaning stations. In Yap it's small wrasse and juvenile jacks. As these cleaner fish dine, they seem to mellow out the mantas, which then allow human interaction.

Jesse: On the cleaning station, you can actually see the wrasse go inside the mouth. We've seen them go inside the gill slits and come out through the mouth.

There's also a cleaning mimic, a goby that looks like a cleaner wrasse but it bites; mantas literally jump when they get bitten. These gobies

congregate around the genitals.

Leo: I've never seen any actual fighting between mantas, but one thing they don't like is for another manta to be above them. If that happens, the bottom one will take off. This doesn't occur only during mating season, but at any time. If they feel another one on top, within about 4 feet, they move away and let the other one have that spot. That's the way they maneuver over the best place on the ridge for cleaning.

Rafael: Mantas run away from the adult jacks because they bite. Some have open wounds on the end of the tail; I've seen jacks biting it.

MATING

Mating on Yap usually takes place in winter, and involves spectacular manta parades that the guides call trains. It hasn't been observed by guides at San Benedicto.

Jesse: The best time for mating is late November through March, when they will be in a train every time at Mil Channel. I've seen up to



GOOD OR IS COMING BACK;



A manta and its attending remora cruise over a diver.

17 in a train. They move around different ways, dancing and doing loops and things like that. Whatever the female is doing, the rest of the train will imitate. It's mostly males following and chasing each other, not just the lead female. You can see the male, who is smaller, trying to climb on top. He holds on only with claspers. They are together three or four minutes, the female usually trying to get away.

Leo: Outside of mating season I don't think they ever try to have sex. One of the big females is in front, mostly males chasing her, but also some females who just join the train and go along. But the males are just after the lead female. I've seen them actually mating; the sperm looks like a black cloud. The male is on top of the female, presses her down, and they do a loop. They are together less than a minute. At this time of year the males are kind of dangerous. They display aggression toward each other, trying to get to the female first, and don't want divers or any-

thing else coming close.

INTERACTIONS WITH PEOPLE

In Yap, divers stay on the bottom or behind rocks and the mantas swim directly overhead, while at San Benedicto, divers hover in the water column and are allowed to touch the mantas but may not use gloves.

The mantas' skin has a sandpaper texture, like that of sharks, so a light touch prevents abrasions to both human and manta.

In both locations, individuals have been identified and named by patterns on their undersides, which are as unique as fingerprints. This helps establish individual behavioral traits, like welcoming human interaction or shying away from it.

Bill: When there are lots of divers, it's best to sit still and remain where the guide puts you. They'll take a look at the divers, then do whatever they want to do. Strobes don't bother them; it's when photographers move above the coral heads to get closer that the mantas

move away. So the most important thing is to remain still and be patient. As they pass overhead, hold your breath momentarily or exhale slowly. Most of them don't like bubbles.

Rafael: It's obvious they are hanging around for the bubbles. Some have rashes on their stomachs, probably from divers rubbing too much. I've seen scratch marks all the way down, but when we return a week later they're healed.

Scott: If you don't chase them, they'll get curious and swim closer till they get right next to you and stop. What they like best is the feel of bubbles on their body. If you just get underneath and blow bubbles, they hover, then you can touch them. I think they recognize people and seem to remember who is aggressive and who isn't. Some divers who chased them could never get close again.

Rafael: I don't think they like to be touched. Don't touch the wingtips or the tail; they will take off immediately. The times they are the most docile is when divers are underneath them. Scott and I have been trying to observe if all the touching has any effect on their skin. At the end of a day at the Boiler, I've noticed they are missing part of their protective slime. But when we come back a week to 10 days later it's back as though nothing has happened.

Scott: I was playing with one manta for a long time. Every time she circled right over the top of me and stopped, she would sink due to negative buoyancy. Having to clear my ears made me realize what was happening. On her final pass I crashed to the bottom with this huge manta on top of me, then suddenly she took off. I think she was just playing.

Scott: They will actually stop swimming when you touch them in a place they like, but take off immediately if you touch somewhere they don't like. They like to be rubbed just behind the eyes, and don't mind being touched above and below the mouth, but don't like it on gills, wingtips or the tail. When a wingtip touches a camera strobe or fins, they'll bolt, probably because plastic feels strange. ■

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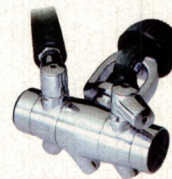
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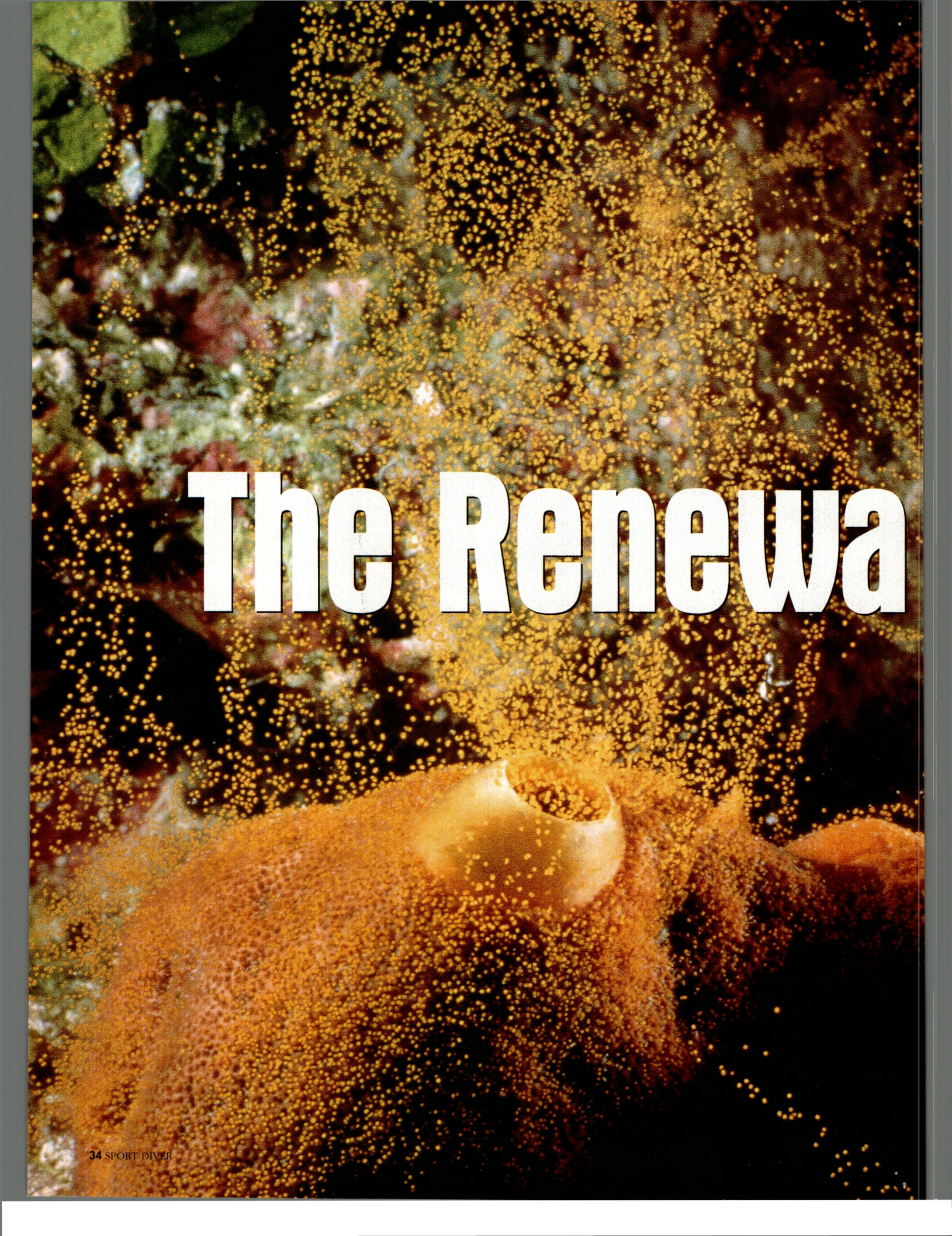
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The Renewa



I of Life

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY DOUG PERRINE

Life in the ocean is a constant struggle to survive. But it's also a struggle to reproduce, and in the game of evolution, survival by itself doesn't earn you any chips — just the chance to keep playing for another round. You must pass on your genes to future generations to win the prize of immortality.

Marine organisms have come up with an astounding variety of ways to replicate themselves. For convenience, biologists like to classify them as either “K-selected” or “R-selected.” (The letters R and K refer to symbols for mathematical constants in equations that quantify these strategies.) Of course, in the real world, not everything fits neatly in one of two boxes. But the labels serve as convenient terms to describe the ends of a

R - S E L E C T E D

Ectyoplasia ferox

SPONGE

Some species of sponges release their eggs, as these are doing, in synchrony with the release of sperm by other members of their species. In other types of sponges, fertilization is internal. Sperm is released into the current, and drawn into the egg chambers of other sponges. The larvae are brooded internally, and released at an advanced stage.





spectrum, with many organisms falling near one end or another, and only a few lying ambiguously in the middle.

The vast majority of creatures in the ocean are "R-strategists." R-selected organisms produce vast numbers of offspring, but each one has a low chance of survival. Usually eggs and sperm are cast into the ocean, with no further attention from the parents. Most have short life spans and are highly sus-

K - S E L E C T E D

Megaptera novaengliae

HUMPBACK WHALES

Courtship begins with a journey of 2,000 to 5,000 miles from the high-latitude feeding areas to low-latitude breeding areas. On the breeding grounds, the males sing elaborate songs that are somehow involved with courtship but usually serve to attract other males, which sometimes fight with the singer. One female can attract a large number of suitors (I've seen over 20 in a group) that compete to accompany her. The rivalry sometimes gets quite violent. While nearly everybody believes that mating occurs in the breeding areas, nobody has ever seen humpback whales mating, in spite of years of intensive observation. For that matter, nobody has ever seen a birth, although some pieces of placenta have been recovered.

(Photo was taken under National Marine Fisheries Service scientific research permit #633 issued to the Hawaii Whale Research Foundation.)

*Linckia multifora***SEA STARS**

Sea stars (depending on the species) can reproduce both sexually and asexually. They also have amazing powers of regeneration. In most species, a single arm with a piece of the central disc can re-grow an entire sea star. In some, including the one pictured, only the arm is required. A sea star can autotomize, or cast off an arm, just as a crab can, or as a lizard casts off its tail. A predator can then make a meal of the arm, while the sea star escapes. Sometimes the arm is not eaten, and grows a new body, while the star grows a new arm. In this case, the result of predation has been not death, but new life.

ceptible to short-term environmental fluctuations; i.e., a slight change in temperature or current direction could wipe out most of one year's reproductive effort. But they make up for it over the long term by force of numbers. And their greater reproductive rate gives them better adaptability to survive long-term environmental changes. R-selected organisms can also withstand high levels of fishing pressure. Up to a point, the number of offspring that join the population each year depends more upon environmental factors than upon how many of the adults survived to reproduce the previous year.

K-selected organisms, on the other hand,



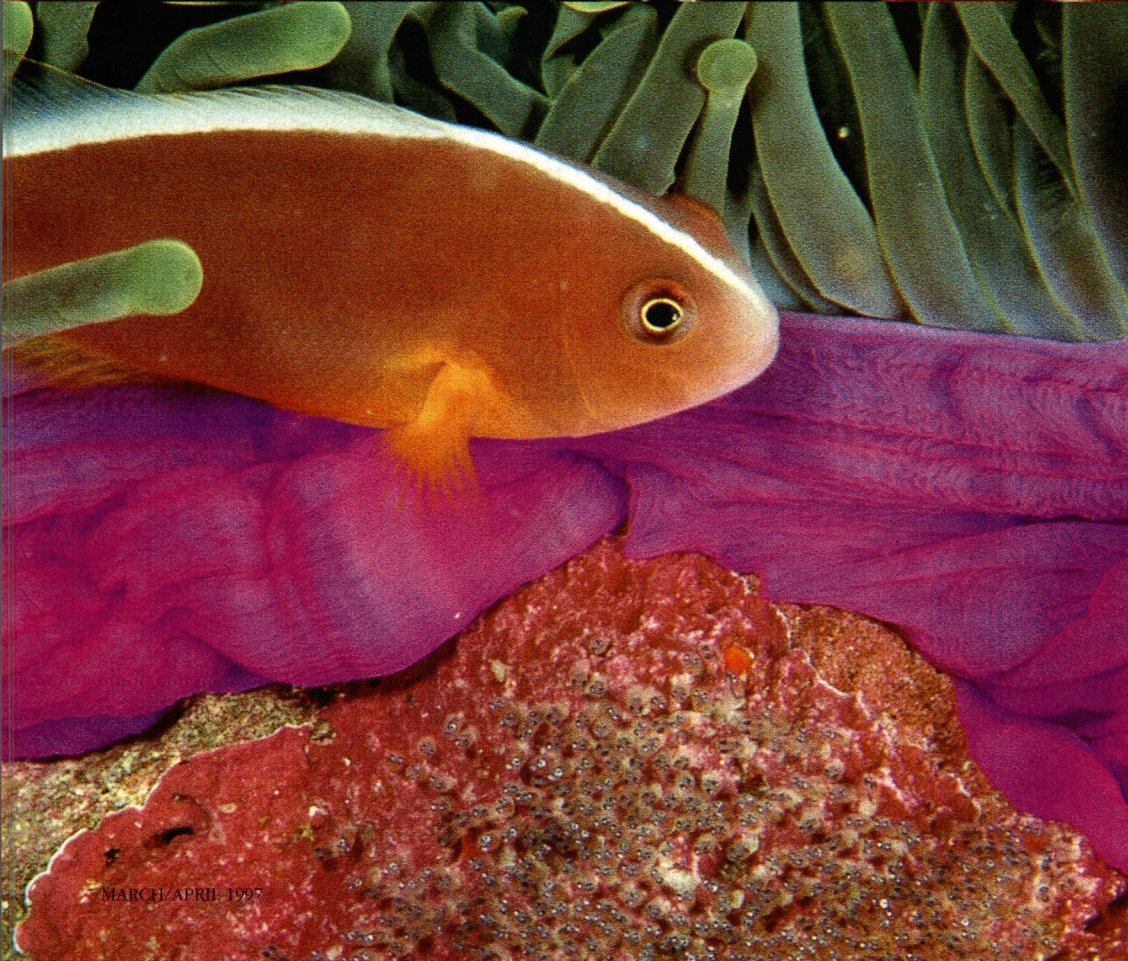


tend to be long-lived. They have fewer offspring, but most of them survive due to extended care given by one or both parents.

Parental care makes them less susceptible to annual variations in environmental conditions, but the low reproductive rate makes the entire population vulnerable to long-term changes, especially any increase in mortality that reduces the number of reproducing adults. High levels of fishing can cause populations of K-strategists to crash. In some cases the population never recovers, even when fishing is stopped. Marine mammals and sharks are good examples of K-selected organisms. ▀

R - S E L E C T E D

Amphiprion akallopisos



ANEMONEFISH

In anemonefish, like other damselfish, the males are responsible for guarding the eggs. But they make their job considerably easier by laying them under the skirt of their anemone, which contributes the protection of its stinging tentacles. The males also have an easier time attracting a female to the nest, since there is usually only one reproductive pair on each anemone. If something happens to the female, the male begins immediately to reverse sex, and the largest juvenile begins to change into a reproductive male.

Tales From the Naked Warriors

STORY BY GARY P. JOYCE

First on the Beach

Bob Baird and Murray Henry lay at the tide line watching and listening. Each swimmer's area of responsibility was 100 yards of shoreline. Clad in bathing suits and reef shoes, each carrying only a knife and a slate strapped to their thighs, they completed their reconnaissance.

"At Guam we could hear them talking, we were so close," says Henry. "They were rebuilding their fortifications and you could see these old cement mixers out there and guys walking around smoking cigarettes," says Baird. "They never knew we were there."

Bob Baird and Murray Henry are sitting in lawn chairs outside the UDT-SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida. The occasion is the annual UDT Muster, a gathering of the dwindling clan of World War II combat swimmers — Scouts and Raiders, Naval Combat Demolition Unit (NCDU), UDT men and SEALs. Henry and Baird are meeting old team members, catching up with others they've met at earlier Musters, enjoying the sunshine and rehashing the memories of the halcyon days as World War II inevitably worked its way to a close. Both are comfortable talking about their experiences. They — and most of their comrades — belie their age with the light in their eyes, a certain puffed-out-chest-straight-back hint in their now-aging postures. Some of the men are infirm — there's a walker here, a wheelchair there, an O₂ tank over there — and none of them gets around as smoothly as they once did, but regardless of what time has done to their bodies they exhibit that peculiar trait that seems to be inherent in men who've been in special operations units. These are men who've gone to war umbilicalled to other men by the strength of the word "buddy," men who have seen the White Elephant and lived to tell about it.

Henry and Baird saw action swimming ashore at Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Peleliu and at Leyte in the Philippines.

"The toughest was Peleliu," recalls Baird. "That was the worst battle for us ... and the Marines too."

"Leyte was more like an afternoon swim," says Henry. The teams found plenty of obstacles, but they were all fish traps ... and the swimmers found they hadn't been loaded with explosives as the intelligence people had told them.

"That was Navy Intelligence," says Baird as Henry laughingly adds the traditional military rejoinder of "Now there's a misnomer!"

I get the first hint that the demolition swimmers weren't exactly how I pictured them. Of course, my only reference was the movie *The Frogmen*, but from listening to the men talk, somehow ...

Bill Dawson, a NCDU 2 swimmer, laughs when I ask about equipment. "We did 12 invasions," he says, "and we never had any fins!" Dawson whispers this to me as he and I walk toward the beach where he did his training in order to photograph him holding a pair of the original hard rubber fins,



A UDT MAN WITH "ALL" HIS EQUIPMENT — REEF SHOES, MASK, FINS, BATHING SUIT AND KNIFE.

*Photo courtesy of
UDT-SEAL Museum*

NCDU 127 hit Utah Beach at 6:20 a.m., the tide chasing them at a rate of foot every eight minutes.

the round and flimsy face mask and a knife — the “dive” equipment of a combat swimmer.

The Scouts and Raiders and the NCDU predated even the most rudimentary equipment, and their tactics were different than the UDT's as well. Most NCDU teams saw action in Europe, and their biggest operation was the Normandy invasion, when 21 NCDU teams hit Omaha Beach and 11 went to Utah Beach (along with Scouts and Raiders) — landing with the first wave of assault troops and clearing anything that might slow down the landing.

“We weren't supposed to disturb the livestock,” recalls John Ditmer of NCDU 127, who landed on Utah Beach. “We didn't have much breakfast that morning, and this fella,” Ditmer points to his buddy, Myron Walsh, “had a pistol, and ... uh .. we had to protect ourselves from this here big pig. Before the day was over the paratroopers had come in and they hadn't any chow so we gave what was left to them fellows.”

JOURNAL JUNE 1944

June 1 — Finished
blasting channel,

2 air raids,
bombing at night.

June 2 — Three
air raids, 10
planes shot down
“Jap,” L.C. I. 448
got one.

June 4 — Jap
task force headed
this way, Biak,
night bombing,
our force arrived.

— William
Dawson; NCDU#2.

“H-Hour was about 6:30 in the morning, and we were on the beach about 20 minutes after six,” Walsh recalls. “It was cold, wet and windy. The tide was coming in and we had to hustle to get up on the beach. The tide was unbelievable. [The 25-foot tide at the invasion site came in an average of a foot every eight minutes.]”

The NCDU men carried their explosives strapped front and back — and armed — in Hagensen packs. Each pack contained 10 2-pound plastic explosive charges. As the rest of the assault forces landed, the NCDU continued clearing obstacles, mines, wrecked landing craft — anything and everything

that might hinder the influx of Allied troops. On Utah Beach the NCDU suffered six dead and 11 wounded; those on Omaha were not as lucky — casualties ran to 41 percent of the teams involved.

Thirty NCDU teams were used in the invasion of southern France, where the major obstacle they encountered were pilings driven into the sand with mines atop them.

“We'd have a swimmer go down and tie a charge at the base,” says Walsh. “Then he'd tie the det cord [a cord-like explosive] to a block of wood that'd float the det cord to the surface and swim to the next, and the next and the next. Then we set it off from the beach.”

“You had to tie a square knot,” remembers John Dunford of 127 (and later UDT 24). “If you used a granny knot, sometime you had a misfire ... or a good chance of one.”



**BILL DAWSON,
NCDU #2.
“WHAT FINS?”**

THE UDT

By August 1944, what became the UDT was in full fling as the focus of the war shifted to bringing the Japanese war machine to its knees. Again the perception of what the men had to work with was different than the reality.

“*The Naked Warrior*,” laughs

Joe Moretti of UDT 8, referring to the title of the definitive book on the UDT. Moretti is a fairly spry and nattily attired in a blue pullover sweater with a UDT insignia on the breast. He is 89 and the oldest UDT man around. “That was what we wore. All I had was shorts, a dagger, a watch and something on my thigh to write on. When we got masks and fins — you had to seal the loose glass on the masks, and the rubber of the fins was so hard I couldn't carve my initials into it with my knife. It really used to tear up your ankles. We heard about those rubber suits but we never saw them. And [scuba] tanks? Everybody thinks we had tanks. You hadda hold your breath ... and you could do a pretty good job of it, especially when they were shooting at you!”

“Take Iwo Jima,” says Andy Andrews of UDT 15, which was knocked out of action at Iwo Jima, losing 18 dead and 22 wounded — the worst casualties suffered by any UDT during the war. “We swam in two days before the Marines to chart the water depth, the slope of the beach — it was 11 in the morning when we went in. We went around the other side of the island and did it again at 4 p.m. to



**JOE MORETTI,
UDT 8; THE OLDEST
UDT MAN AROUND**



(TOP) GREASING UP FOR COLD-WATER OPS. PICK-UP OPERATION IN PROGRESS. THE SYSTEM WAS DEVELOPED AT FORT PIERCE, FL.

*Photos courtesy of
UDT-SEAL Museum*

Training for the invasion: "It was in 55-degree water — we wore bathing suits just like we always did."

throw the Japanese off. The hairy part was when you got into shallow water, and one of each pair had to go up on the beach and get a sample of sand."

But the danger to the UDT men paid off — especially for the Marines who would land on Iwo. The teams discovered the beach proposed as the landing site was made of volcanic ash. "It was like ball bearings," recalls Andrews. "Like walking in a wheat bin." While the ash would have a major effect on Iwo landings nonetheless, a more stable beach was chosen.

WAR'S END

The Scouts and Raiders, NCDU and UDT remained active until the Japanese surrender, which was as much of a surprise to the combat swimmers as to any other troop. The last combat mission for the Scouts and Raiders was at Tarakan in Borneo, the last for the NCDU (teams 2

and 3) was at Labuan in Brunei Bay, Borneo, and the final combat mission for the UDT was at Balikpapan in Borneo (teams 11 and 18).

Some teams were en route or already training for the invasion of Japan when the war ended. Dusty Ostendorf of UDT 22 recalls training in northern California to acclimate for the expected invasion of Japan. "It was in 55-degree water — we wore bathing suits, just like we always dressed."

Tom Lockerbie, a UDT 7 man who swam ashore at Sendai in northern Japan, recalls his first look at the enemy's homeland. "There was a berm of volcanic sand about 5 or 6 feet high. We were swim-

ming and we could hardly get up it, but the water was 64 degrees and we were freezing our asses off. Thank God there was nobody there."

Under the plan for the invasion, 30 UDTs would

perform pre-assault recon and demolition ahead of the 5 million assault troops that were to be gathered for what was expected to be a bloodbath. The first landing was scheduled for November 1, 1945.

But on August 6 the U.S. dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Japan surrendered eight days later. The war was over.

THE END OF AN ERA

The NCDU and Scouts and Raiders were demobilized, but the UDT remained an active unit participating in some classified activity after the war. Team 1 deployed and worked during the Korean War; their equipment was more sophisticated than it was in WW II, but they never enjoyed equipment as good as today's recreational divers do.

In 1961 Ray Boehm, a former UDT bosun's mate then commissioned as an officer, took volunteers from Team 21 and in 1962 organized them as the SEALs, who would suffer their baptism of fire on a wholesale level in the muddy brown waters of the Mekong Delta in Vietnam.

The UDT hung onto its role through the 1960s and 1970s, but its era was drawing to a close. Finally, in May 1983 the UDT was officially decommissioned and the hardmen of underwater combat passed into history.

But while their unit and the jobs they did may be a historical footnote to the war in the Pacific and in Europe, the job these men — Scouts and Raiders, NCDU and UDT — did lives on in their memories and in the UDT-SEAL Museum at Fort Pierce. Inside the museum, the exhibits take you through the wars in chronological order taking you through the Scouts and Raiders era, the NCDU era, the UDT and SEAL eras, but outside there's a bronze statue — a young man, a UDT combat swimmer, with a round mask up on his head, a knife strapped to his bathing suit, a pair of fins in his hand. The statue straddles a blue pool of water and looks out over assorted war machines that now lay dormant in the museum's courtyard — no longer breathing fire, no longer feeling the blood and sweat of the men who rode them.

I look around at the old men — Moretti, Dawson, Henry, Andrews, Ostendorf, Lockerbie, Baird, Walsh, Dunford, Ditmer and all the others I spoke to — and look back at the bronze combat swimmer.

The men I spoke to today are that swimmer in the statue. Maybe 50 years have passed, but they're definitely the guy in the statue. ■

JOURNAL DEC. 1944

Dec. 22 —

Unloaded all our TNT on A.K. 5.

Dec 24 — Went to Tackloban on mail run. Got three letters for Xmas. Had a few cans of beer. Air raid. One plane shot down.

Dec. 25 — Quiet all day. Air raids all night.

— William

Dawson; NCDU #2.



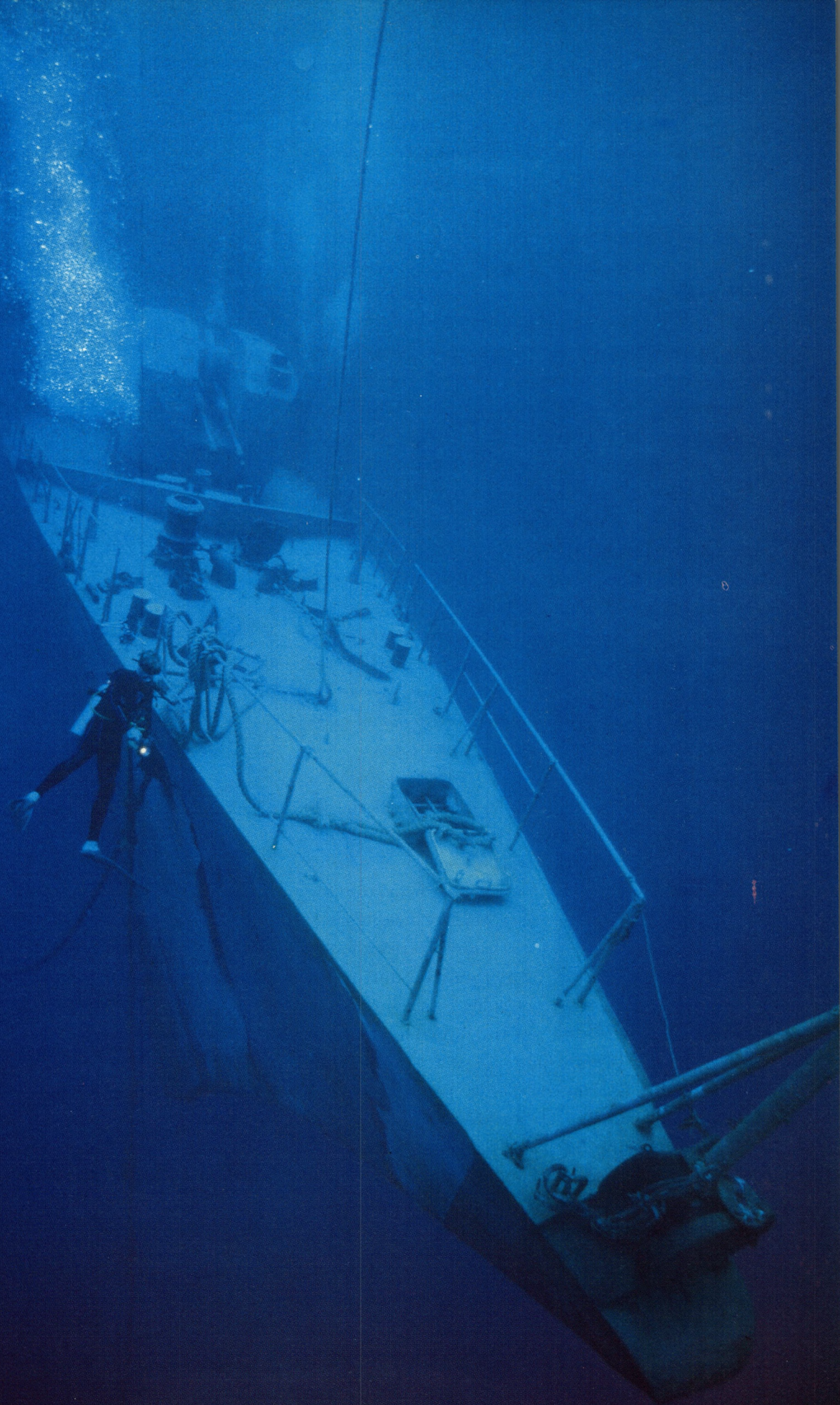
(TOP) UDT 11 MEMBERS CLEARING A CHANNEL AT OKINAWA. (BOTTOM) A UDT TRAINEE PRACTICES SETTING CHARGES.

*Photos courtesy of
UDT-SEAL Museum*

A Cold Warrior Goes Down in A Warm Sea

Last September the clarion resounded in Cayman Brac with the sinking of the 330-foot-long Russian Frigate #356. This newest Cayman undersea attraction rests in a wide sand chute 300 yards off the old Buccaneer Inn on the northwest shore. The frigate was renamed the *Captain Keith Tibbetts* for a legendary and beloved Cayman Bracker, and the sinking was a major Cayman event done amid much fanfare. More than 600 people, including the governor and numerous government dignitaries, witnessed the sinking. To add to the drama, film producer Jean-Michel Cousteau stood on deck while

Story & photos by Jesse Cancelmo



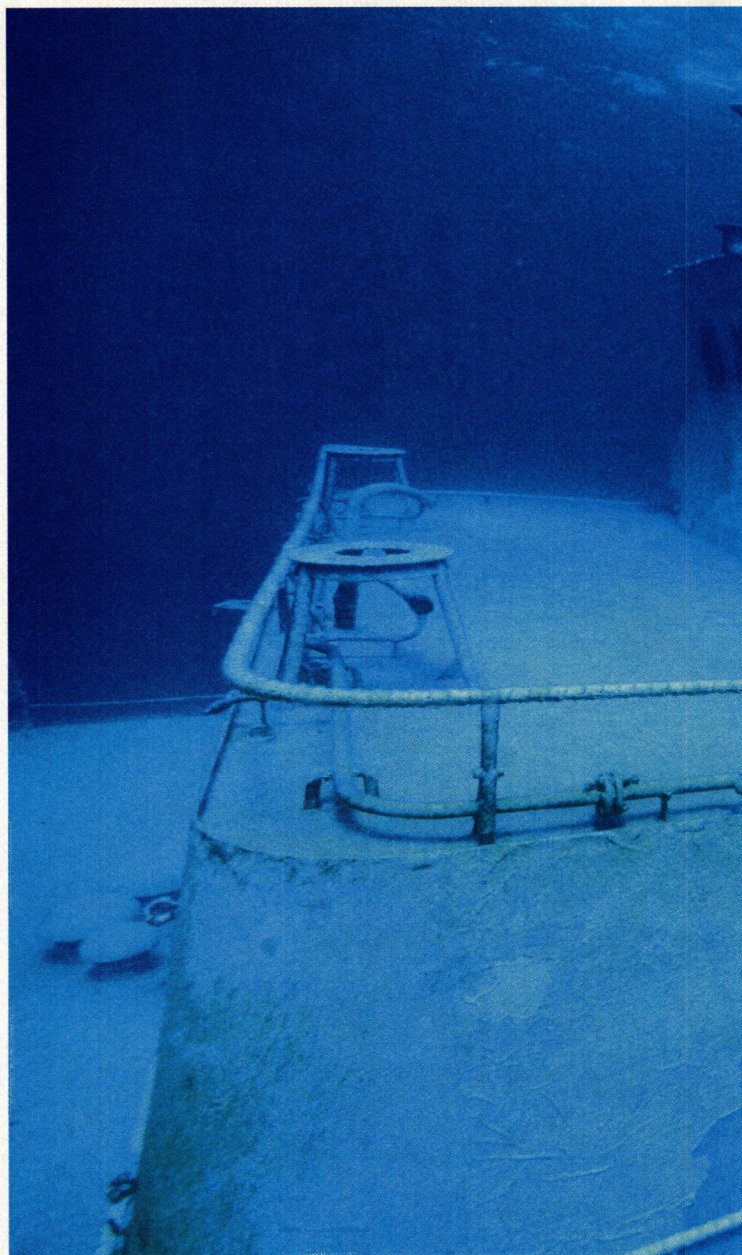
its slow descent to the bottom. After a 12-hour scuttling process, the stern finally went down. As the bow followed suit, water gushers shot skyward and the surface became a Jacuzzi powered by the massive volume of air purged from below decks. The wreck sits upright facing away from shore with the bow angled down and the hull listing slightly to port. Separate mooring balls are secured to the ship at the bow, the stern and at midship. The bow is in 100 feet of water and the stern settled at a depth of 55 feet. Upper portions of the wreckage are in less than 20 feet of water which will allow snorkelers to enjoy the submerged Russian war machine. Described as a Brigadier Type II Frigate, the #356 was commissioned from Nodhodka, Russia, in 1984 and was berthed in Cienfuegos, Cuba, prior to being moved to Cayman Brac by tugboat.

As I made my descent from the stern buoy I caught my first glimpse of the massive gray ghost-looking structure. I finned straight to the bottom to check out the starboard propeller, shaft and rudder, all of which for now are bare of growth. It almost looks like the metal was blasted clean by winter storm surges. The two huge turret-mounted guns on the stern and bow decks are most impressive and make

stunning photo props.

Divers can tour the upper weather deck and can enter the officers' quarters and the pilot house, which is only 35 feet below the surface. Much of the equipment and hardware inside the ship was removed during the cleaning process, but most of the binnacle and helm

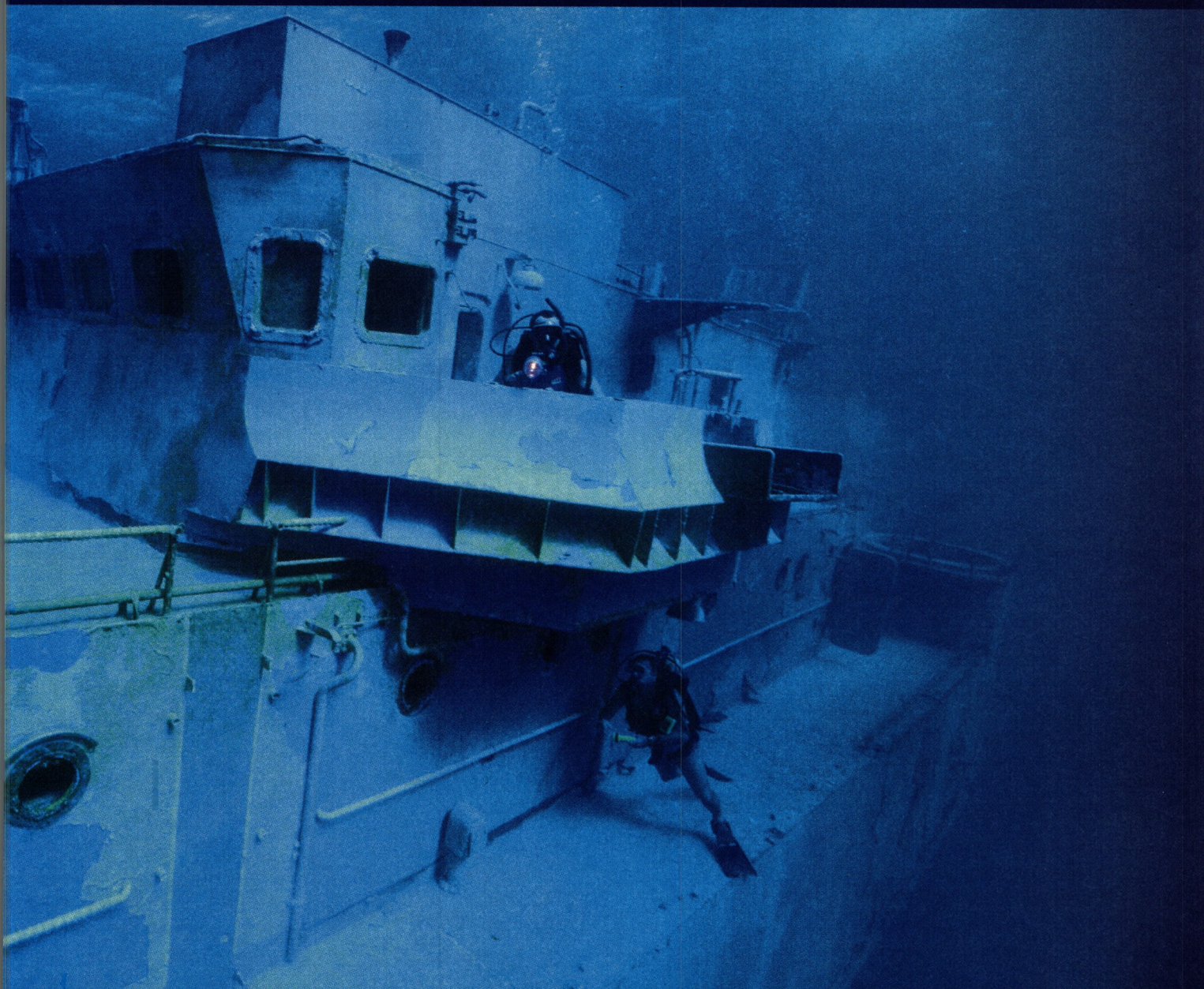
pieces are intact. Control and navigational cabinets are open, exposing the many cables once integral to the ship's operation. At amidships, lifeboat davits minus the boats still have ropes and pulleys dangling in the current. A large white Russian star, symbolic of the former Soviet Union, is visible just below the ship's bow hawser pipe. The wreck's lower deck areas are off limits for obvious safety



reasons. Crisscrossed metal bars were welded across critical openings in the deck.

Nearby reef residents quickly discovered their new artificial haven. I saw two large hogfish meandering along the hull and a pair of stunning French angels swimming in concert over the stern deck. A school of shiny permit gliding near the bottom was a pleasant surprise, and the dozens of juvenile wrasse and sergeant majors nipping at growth on the radar tower were an indication that the start of a food chain was already under way. ■

Upper portions of the wreckage are in less than 20 feet of water, which allows snorkelers to enjoy the submerged Russian war machine.



One of the two turret-mounted guns that were left on the *Tibbetts* (right) prior to the sinking should provide dynamic photo opportunities. The upper portion of the wreck is in less than 20 feet of water which will allow snorkelers to explore it. The *Tibbett's* bow rests at 100 feet and the stern at around 55 feet.



Toy Story

You've tried it all. State-of-the-art dive computers, the latest rebreathers, the most innovative tinted masks. Yet you want more. Your longing to demo the best and the brightest in dive gear, seemingly, cannot be satisfied. If this describes you, you may be the perfect candidate to fire up one of the many dive propulsion vehicles on the market and begin flying underwater.

The people who make dive propulsion vehicles, or DPVs, know a little secret about the average diver. He or she loves dive gear, loves to — when financially feasible — upgrade scuba equipment, loves to impress the heck out of his dive buddies.

"People in diving are gadget junkies," says Larry Speaker, marketing director for Stuart Cove's dive operator, which late last year began offering DPV-dedicated dives. "It's very easy, it's couch-potato diving. And we can take people on incredible adventures."

Stuart Cove's purchased 14 Apollo AV-1 DPVs so "scooter pilots" can explore remote locations on the Tongue of the Ocean walls, a mammoth trench off New Providence Island near Nassau that stretches 120 miles across and plunges 6,000 feet down. The two-tank dive, at a cost of \$115, is restricted to divers with open-water certification and

at least 15 logged dives or some type of advanced certification. All pilots, Speaker adds, must have their own dive computer.

"It's a very pristine adventure that's also cutting edge," he says. "I'm able to get a toy in someone's hands that they've never tried before. We think scooter-

ers are an awesome product for recreational divers."

Despite Stuart Cove's foray, DPVs for the most part have been limited to the realm of the technical diver. Cave divers, wreck divers, underwater photographers and military personnel have been relying on DPVs for years for rapid,

effortless exploration. And with DPV price tags ranging from \$800-\$6,000, that's not likely to change any time soon.

American Underwater, which manufactures the Predator series and the Draco model, caters to the highly sophisticated technical diver. Arnold Jackson, president of American Underwater, says his torpedo-style scooters are most often used by commercial fishermen and by cave divers.

"These are not toys,



JESSE CANEUNO

MANUFACTURER	MODEL	SPEED	BURN TIME	PRICE
American Underwater 352-669-5483	Predator 4000	2.8 mph	3 hours	\$3,800
	Predator 3000	2.8 mph	2 hours	\$3,300
	Predator 2000	2.8 mph	1 hour	\$2,800
	Draco	4.5 mph	5-6 hours	\$5,000-\$6,000
Apollo 415-392-9143	AV-1	2.4 mph	40-60 min.	\$1,995
Dacor 847-446-9555	See Apollo			
Farallon 770-414-0550	MK-8	3.2 mph	50-60 min.	\$3,995
	MK-7	2.75 mph	50-60 min.	\$2,495
	Tandem DPV	5 mph	50-60 min.	NA
Mode Industries 954-832-9900	Maxx Stealth	3.25 mph	40-65 min.	\$1,995
	Maxx Stealth	2.25 mph	80 min.	\$1,995
Oceanic 510-562-0500	Mako	2.7 mph	2 hours	\$1,995
Scubapro 800-GO-SCUBA	Sea Shuttle	2 mph	40 min.	\$1,095
Torpedo 813-733-2218	2000-25	2.5 mph	55-90 min.	\$800-\$850
	2000-20	2 mph	80-110 min.	\$800-\$850
Vanmar 805-688-8115	Powerfin	5 mph	90 min.	\$3,250

they are a serious piece of equipment," he says. "They have been able to extend cave diving astronomically."

American Underwater, which also makes high-quality video housings and dive lights, can customize its DPVs to include platforms for still and video photography gear.

Mode Industries, another DPV manufacturer, boasts the only scooter on the market with snorkelers in mind. Mort Lashman, the company's owner, says his Maxx Stealth comes with two motor sizes: the larger, with 48-50 pounds of underwater thrust, is geared to scuba divers; the smaller, with 33-35 pounds of thrust, is aimed at snorkelers. With a maximum speed of 2.25 mph, the unit with the smaller motor, Lashman says, is perfect for effortlessly gliding over reefs. Both models come with the

motor mounted below the DPV unit (rather than behind like most scooters on the market) and a sturdy polyethylene housing.

"Eighty percent of our industry is snorkeling," he says. "I don't know why everyone always talks about DPVs for diving. The people who have snorkeled with this unit love it."

Farallon USA, with its MK-8 and MK-7 designs, brings a slightly different wrinkle to the DPV party. Instead of hanging on to the traditional torpedo-style machine, riders of Farallon DPVs sit on a T-bar then lay the body over the unit.

"If you are using a traditional DPV for a long period of time your arms can get pretty tired," claims Peter Vickers, president of Farallon. "This is much more comfortable when riding for extended periods."

Vickers says his target

customer is "anyone who needs a machine." Which includes technical divers and sport divers. "We didn't want to stereotype ourselves."

Also in the works at Farallon is a Tandem DPV, which is expected to go into production sometime this spring. The Tandem model, basically two MK-8s linked together, can be disassembled underwater in less than three minutes, Vickers says. A price for the Tandem was not available at press time.

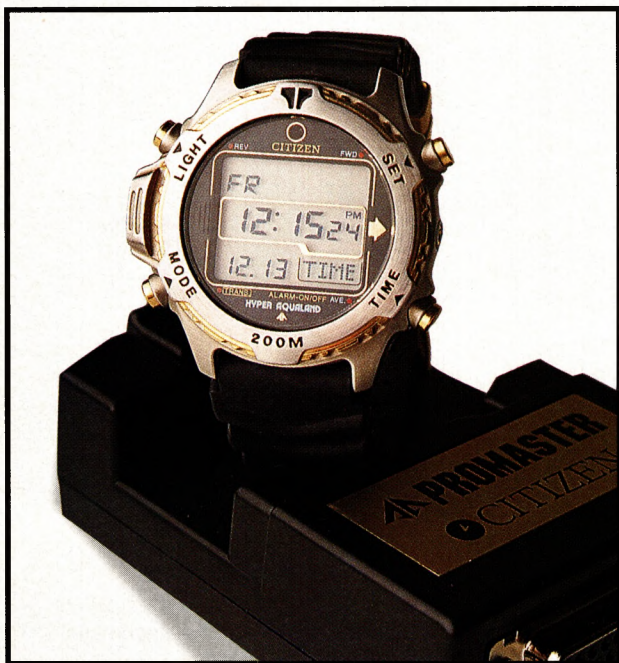
Still another design permutation is the Powerfin made by Vanmar. The Powerfin, which operates on two 24-volt dry cell batteries, wraps around your scuba tanks almost like a back pack. The Powerfin, which weighs 80 pounds dry and is 24 inches long, has mainly found its way into military applications so

far, says Vanmar president Bruce Vandale.

So, if you've got some disposable income and a keen desire to own the latest gear, DPVs may be for you. But before you rocket out to the reefs on one it's a good idea to get a little training. DPV use isn't rocket science, but ascending or descending at a 5-mph clip can be potentially problematic. DPV specialty classes are offered by a number of shops across the country. Check with your local shop or certification agency.

"It's not a problem with the scooters, it's a problem with some of the pilots," says Stuart Cove's Speaker, referring to ascending or descending too rapidly while using a DPV. "That's why we make a dive computer mandatory. You've got to watch what you're doing." — *Richard Brunelli*

Hyper Aqualand



Back in the fourth grade, the number-one item on my Christmas wish list was a dive watch. Inspired by Mike Nelson, I lusted after one of those heavy, chrome-and-black waterproof time-keepers with the rotating bezel that let the world know you were a scuba diver, ready for adventure.

But, as time passed my underwater watch of choice became a \$40 Casio G-Shock. It was great as a backup timer to a computer, and rugged enough to count off run times during a deep mixed-gas dive.

Every once in a while, I miss that old heavy metal dive watch — which is probably why I was attracted to Citizen's new Hyper Aqualand watch. It has the look and substantial feel of dive watches of yesteryear, combined with today's micro-processor "smarts."

Take a giant stride overboard and the Hyper Aqualand automatically shifts to dive mode, in

which it tracks your elapsed dive time, displays your depth, and measures the water temperature. On the way up, the watch

gives an audible alarm if you exceed 60 feet per minute, then switches to surface mode once you're back on deck.

Want to review the dive? The Hyper Aqualand displays minute-by-minute profile information of up to 30 dives. Want more? Plug it in to the included interface module to download up to six hours of time, depth and temperature data to a personal computer.

The included software package will display this data in graphic form, and also includes a searchable electronic dive log combining watch data with user-supplied information such as site names, dive buddy, dive notes, etc.

In short, the Hyper Aqualand is not just a gee-whiz wrist toy, it's a tool that real divers could make

use of. It won't replace your dive computer, but it can provide functional, stylish backup.

With its two-tone metal case and beefy black rubber wrist band (complete with "No Decompression Limits" graphics), the Hyper Aqualand makes the same kind of statement my childhood dream dive watch aimed for: "This guy's the real stuff, not some off-the-rack wanna-be." Mike Nelson would have been proud. — *Pierce Hoover*

HYPER AQUALAND

SUGGESTED RETAIL: \$495

with PC interface and software

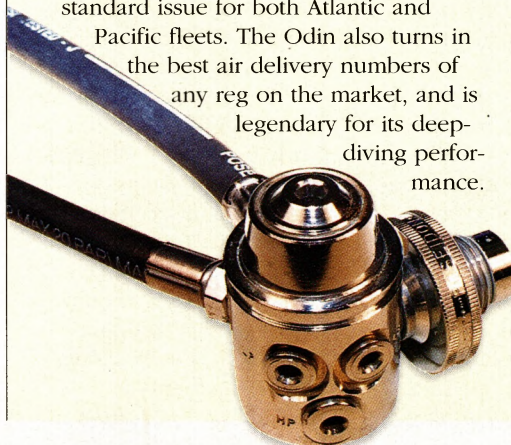
FEATURES: Water resistant to 200 meters; depth display and memory to 260 feet; dive log memory stores 30 dives and downloads six hours of dive data; self-activating dive and surface modes; ascent rate alarm; stopwatch and date display date; screw-back case.

MORE INFORMATION: Citizen Watch Company, 1200 Wall Street West, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071.

Poseidon Odin

Hard-core exploration divers have a long-standing love affair with Poseidon regulators, and despite the recent flurry of new high-performance, high-tech regs on the market, many still consider the Poseidon "The One to Have."

The U.S. Navy uses the Odin as its benchmark cold-water regulator, and it's standard issue for both Atlantic and Pacific fleets. The Odin also turns in the best air delivery numbers of any reg on the market, and is legendary for its deep-diving performance.

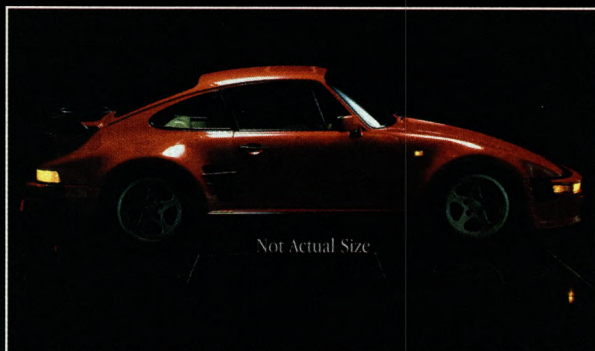


What makes the Odin so special? For starters, there's the high-grade metals and precise Swedish engineering; tolerances are tighter, machining is more exact, threads are turned with more precision.

The proprietary conical high-pressure seat allows the first stage to handle pressures of up to 6,000 pounds, and to last longer at normal operating pressures. Combined with this state-of-the-art first stage is a servo-assisted pilot-valve second stage that breathes dry and smooth in any position and incorporates a safety valve that allows the diver to breath normally during a first stage over-pressure failure. The result is a regulator that combines the reliability and safety with high performance.

Pretty impressive stuff, and all true. But it doesn't end there. The extra performance is a safety factor for recreational divers as well — the Odin breathes a lot

continued on p.55



PERFORMS LIKE A PORSCHE...



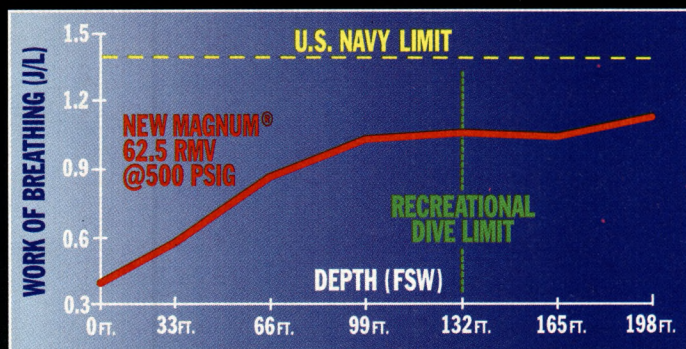
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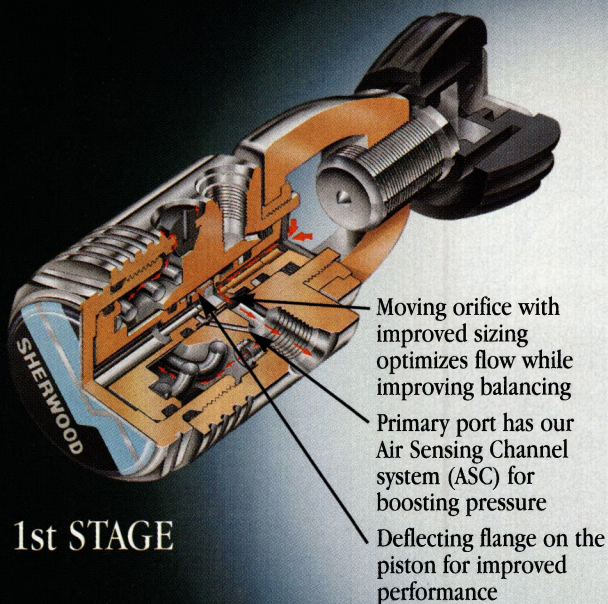


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For more information RSVP #278



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- Improved stem guidance for smooth performance

- New high flow hose
- Reduced spring load for lower cracking effort
- Flexible cover allows for easy purge in all temperatures
- Cover designed with optimal hole pattern for less freeflow in a current



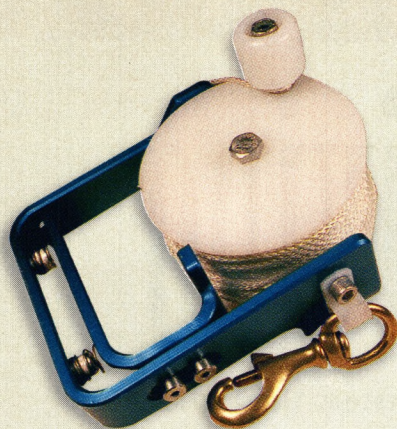
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For more information RSVP #278



Manta Reel

If you've had problems with your wreck reel free-spooling and bird nesting while deploying, Manta Industries has come up with a solution that works. Called the Manta Reel (patent pending) it has a simple spring-loaded lever/stop incorporated into the reel handle that drops down into two notches in the plastic spool and stops it from running. The frame and stop are manufactured of anodized aluminum, the running gear (spindles, springs, etc.) are stainless steel, and the spool is a single piece of UHMW plastic. The Manta comes complete with 200 feet of 30-braid line and a brass bolt snap, so she's ready to go right out of the package. This sucker is solid and well-crafted — an excellent wreck reel. List is \$129.95, from Manta Industries, 800-397-3901. Look for a 500 to 600-foot/36-braid model to be out by the time you read this. — Gary P. Joyce

continued from p52

easier, helping make the entire underwater experience less stressful for the average diver.

Joe Schelorke, the U.S. distributor for Poseidon, says he's seen an increasing number of recreational divers buying Poseidon gear.

"Although we've traditionally been big with the tech community, we think it's a good choice for the Average Joe," he says.

"Imagine a big guy who gets into diving, and goes on his first drift dive with a cheap rental reg. If he has to swim to keep up, his breathing rate will go up, and there's a good chance he'll overbreathe that reg, or at least get a headache. That could turn him off to the sport, and he might think he was the one with the problem, not the reg."

If this same hypothetical diver had been equipped with a high-performance regulator, Schelorke reasons, he would have enjoyed a much better dive.

Schelorke also points out that the Poseidon octopus is not a downgraded regulator, but instead delivers the same smooth, high-performance airflow as the primary regulator — a performance margin that divers will appreciate if they ever need to share air on a deeper dive.

— Pierce Hoover

POSEIDON ODIN

SUGGESTED RETAIL: \$550 with DIN/yoke conversion hardware and carry bag.

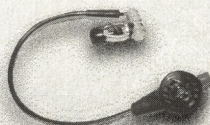
FEATURES: Stainless-steel piston with proprietary conical high-pressure seat; cold-water-ready as is, with optional cold-water kit for extreme conditions; factory prepped with Viton parts and oxygen-compatible lubricants, second stage over-pressure relief valve for uninterrupted airflow.

MORE INFORMATION: Serious Fun, 175 H-1 Commerce Drive, Hauppauge, NY 11788. Phone: 516-231-4475; fax 516-231-4496; e-mail: sfuninc@aol.com.

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Careers in Diving

Sizing up your instructor training center. Some new instructors discuss the nuances of a good training program.

So you wanna be a rock 'n roll star?" Oops, I mean a dive instructor professional. Kind of the same, though, right? Well, apart from the limos, the groupies, the millions, the fame, etc.

A couple of similarities of both careers, however — undoubtedly more important than the above-listed perks — are the passion you must have toward your career and the personal satisfaction you'll get from your efforts. Plus, you'll never

have to wear a suit to work!

Sport Diver caught up with a few rookie instructor pros who had dreams of securing the position they now hold. We wanted to find out what they thought was the most important element of a successful training school, and now that they are out in the field, if it is everything they thought it would be.

Katie Schickel received her PADI Open Water Instructor license at South Point Diver's in Key West in April 1996. Initially working as a

dive master, Katie decided to become an instructor when the facility needed to hire another trainer. To her, the most important aspect of a successful training education is the outlook the course director instills in his students.

"They're teaching you about attitude ... you have to have a certain attitude," says Schickel. "A good course director has to have high expectations of you. They must be able to successfully communicate the kind of qualities you need to become a good instructor. If you have a great teacher, you will emulate them."

For Michelle West, one of the most important benefits that came from becoming a dive instructor through Pro Dive in Fort Lauderdale was their job placement program. Many training facilities offer job placement programs and are highly regarded as a major benefit by many students.

An instructor for almost a year, West now works in the Grand Bahamas for UNEXSO. Sure, West had thoughts of running off to the Caribbean, but didn't really think it would happen that way. "I was looking for an exciting place to work upon completing my course," says West, "and it happened."

Hall's Diving Center alum Bill Harris likes the intangibles of being a dive instructor. "The first time one of your student breathes underwater or the first time they clear their regulator or when other people tell you how good your students look in the water ... you can't help but to feel proud."

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Harris has been a dive instructor professional since March 1996. One of the most important things Hall's passed on to him was the reality of being an instructor — it's not always pretty fishes and 200-foot visibility. Even though Harris has been diving for nearly 20 years, his course director brought him back to the basics and trained out all of his "bad habits."

"A good training school should prepare you for the frustrations you may encounter, like any job. As well as breaking old habits, Hall's prepared me to work in the shop, learn sales ... you can't always be in the water."

Richard Lemieux, an instructor for Club Med in the Turks and Caicos, feels that his training school, Ocean Divers of Key Largo, also prepared him for the unexpected.

"Everybody you're teaching in the pool has different problems that you need to know how to deal with. You learn every day. At Ocean Divers, the trainers are the same way. They go out of their way to make sure you're dealing with your problems correctly."

Lemieux is also a commercial diver who works on hydroelectric dams in Quebec. He became an instructor in late 1996. It provided him with the opportunity to earn a living while escaping from Canada's winters and earning that living doing something that he loved. His plans include opening a dive shop and training facility of his own.

What does he say the shop's primary mission will be? To create safe divers.

As with anything in life, it only becomes what you make it. This rule doesn't apply any differently to those who have aspirations of becoming training professionals in the dive industry. It's not unlike deciding which college or university to attend, or which make and model car is going to give you the best gas mileage.

Research. Research. Research.

Oh yeah, and keep the guitar tuned. You never know. — *Jeri Caruso*

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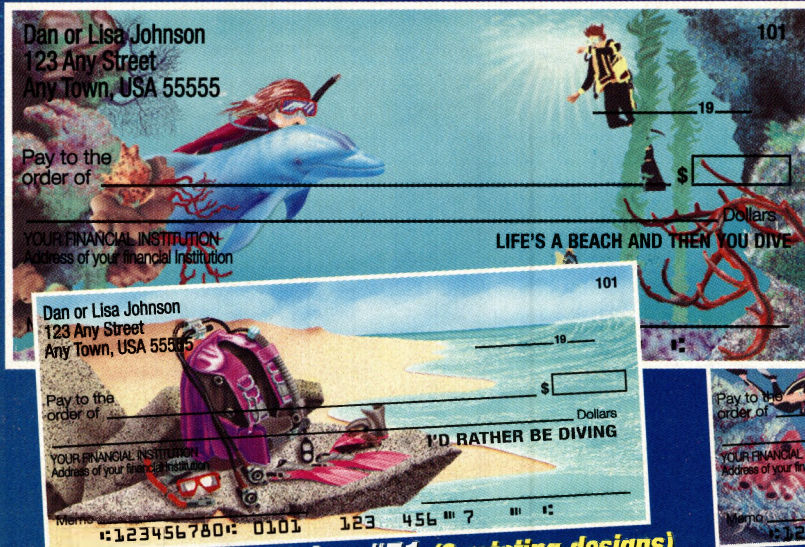
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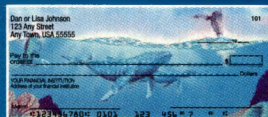
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STEVE SIMONSEN
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A Cozumel dive master plays
with a 6-foot green moray eel.

Story by Jody Shultz
Photos by Greg Johnston

THE REEFS OF COZUMEL

There is no better time to understand the reef structure of Cozumel than spring, but there are some special factors confronting divers at this time of year. One of these is the arrival of sea-thimbles (*dedales* in Spanish) in vast numbers, coating the surface of the sea with a brown, undulating mass and posing a nuisance to those sensitive to their mild sting. Generally the reaction is similar to a mosquito bite, but many people are completely unaffected. A little common sense and a wetsuit or dive skin prevent any problems. On the positive side, sea-thimbles are a delicacy favored by turtles.

Another challenge is the sometimes-daily changing rhythms of currents that can make a guessing game of each dive. Experienced dive guides are able to utilize these conditions to combine and even explore sections of reef that would normally be impractical due to the time limits of the dive profile. When the currents reverse, there is no greater joy than diving a reef you know well, and discovering brand-new terrain.

The geographic formation of Cozumel is best described as a shoreline with nearby scattered patch reefs. Beyond that is an intricate network of shallow reefs forming a buttress. The system culminates with the precipice that is the wall of Cozumel. With the exception of the reefs at each end of the island, all of the reefs are easily navigable with compass and learned navigation skills.

Regardless of your ability, it is always advisable to warm up with a shore dive — they abound in Cozumel — to tune up your skills and check your equipment.

The following list may help you select some of the finer locations. Due to boat traffic I would recommend that you enter south of the main piers in the downtown area, and carry a diver-down flag.

(N=novice; I=intermediate; A=advanced; E=Expert; numerals=depth; asterisks=good for night diving.)

BEACH DIVES

Playa Corona (15-20; N) is the southernmost of the beach sites I'd recommend. It is a beautiful reef with a magnificent network of interconnecting tunnels filled with large schools of silversides. There is a complex cave system here, so be sure that you can see the exit before you enter a cavern.

Chankanaab Park (15-30; N) is a national park and there is an admission fee. Due to traffic this reef has suffered greatly. There is a large statue of Christ, a small statue of the Virgin Guadalupe and remnants of an old boat, home to a large school of grunts. Most interesting is a cavern inhabited by tarpon. A sign warns divers not to go too far in, as it does turn

into a cave system. Lights, knives and gloves are not permitted. Excellent for photography.

Dzul Ha (15-20; N*) is an extraordinarily beautiful place. The long patch reef is easily accessible and teems with fish. From the delicate juvenile spotted drum to the giant super-male rainbow parrotfish, the variety and sheer numbers of fish will astonish you. The current changes constantly so you must be alert, but it is generally mild.

Casa del Mar (15-35; N*) has an easy beach entry sloping gradually to a patch reef at about 15 feet, and then dropping to a narrow strip reef at 35 feet. Marine life is plentiful, and depending upon the season you may encounter large schools of mullet — quite a treat! The remains of a boat house a school of grunts and the occasional moray. The more enterprising might kick out to the wall and drift in to Villablanca beach, catching a taxi to return.

Villablanca (15-20; N*) is directly in front of the Villablanca Hotel and abundant with diverse corals and life. This patch reef is ample for an hour or more of bottom time, and a good place to swim with groups of juvenile spotted drums or discover a rare sea horse; a feather in any diver's cap. Excellent for macro.

There are other places to dive, and one of the great joys of beach diving in Cozumel is exploring new places. Tanks and equipment are available at all of the above sites. Boat traffic is a serious concern, so a dive flag is a must.

MID-REEF DIVES

Just beyond the beach dives lie the mid-region of reefs that range in depth from 40 to 70 feet. Photographic opportunities are limitless and diverse. The reefs will be listed from south to north.

Punta Sur Shallows (15-25; N) has a very silty bottom of fine mud similar to that of a cave system. There are huge sea fans and narrow passages between coral heads. This dive features the only elkhorn coral in Cozumel.

Columbia Shallows (20-40; N) is probably the longest and most diverse of the shallow reefs with sections and pinacles coming within a few feet of the surface. Since it's close to Columbia Lagoon, Cozumel's largest natural estuary, it is flanked by mangroves that protect the reefs from silty runoff and serve as a nursery for quantities of Caribbean fish. Look for the bright burgundy vase sponges.

Dalila (40-70; I) offers rolling plains of coral and gorgonians which flow into a craggy ridge that has schools of hundreds of tangs, grunts and the occasional nurse shark. Gener-



THE BEST WAY TO
EXPLORE THE
REEFS IS BY
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DIVE GUIDE

ally a fast current.

Paso De Cedral (40-60; D) is an area of coral caves housing a remarkable school of glassy sweepers. Surrounding this are overhangs and ledges that shelter large groupers, green and spotted eels, and schooling grunts intermixed with porkfish. Toward the northern end are schooling barracudas. Current can be strong and capricious, and it's not impossible to miss the reef.

Santa Rosa Shallows (30-70; N). An enterprising dive master can link this reef with Paso De Cedral and take advantage of a fast current. Many unsuspecting tourists have logged this dive as Paso De Cedral. This is a patch reef, very loosely constructed, with a good variety of marine life.

Punta Tunich (30-70; D). This reef is famous for its fast current. The wall is very close to the stony outcropping for which it is named (Mayan for "stony point"). Marine life takes refuge from the current in the gullies, and "foxholes" and green morays are common, as are schools of scrawled filefish.

Yucab (40-60; N) is a wide strip reef that has patches on both sides. Current is generally calm and the reef is packed with crabs, octopus and Cozumel's splendid toadfish. Reef triggerfish slip in and out of their shelters and margate school under the overhangs.

Tormentos (50-70; N) is a magnificently sculpted reef with angular, sloping sections accentuated by spectacular overhangs. One portion is divided by a sandy area that resembles rolling dunes or perhaps a large snowdrift, which is a sight not to be missed. It is nicknamed "the moonwalk." Toward the shore, in the grassy areas behind the dune, live sea horses. There is an excellent mix of corals and marine life. Current flows quickly.

Bolones of Chankanaab (50-70; N). Literally translated, it is the "balls" or "balloons" of Chankanaab, so named for the shape of the reef. Coral heads rise 10 to 12 feet from the sea floor in separate islands. Each has its own ecosystem and special characteristics. It is unlike any other reef in Cozumel, and a dream-come-true for the wide-angle photographer.

Chankanaab (40-50; N*) is located geographically in the middle of an eddy, which causes a southerly current. Visibility is generally a little poorer and the water a little colder due to the freshwater runoff from the island. This is unparalleled for photography, and large crabs and lobsters abound in daylight hours. There are lots of harlequin pipefish in the grassy areas,

and eagle rays can occasionally be seen sailing gracefully by in the sandy area between this reef and Bolones.

Paraiso (40-50; N*) is probably the best-known of the middle section reefs and the focus of the controversy over the new cruise ship pier which is under construction. It's located directly in front of the marina named Caleta, and we can only hope it will not become Paradise Lost. This strip reef is a veritable smorgasbord of marine life. The midnight parrotfish is common as well as pairs of French and gray angelfish that have become so accustomed to playing in the bubbles exhaled by their visitors. The first section is lobster heaven to between 30 and 40 lobsters who obligingly line up for photos. The first and second strip are separated by a sandy area about 50

tunate enough to discover turtles and nurse sharks.

THE WALL

Venturing to the wall that frames the island of Cozumel, there are a series of reefs that have connected themselves from one end of the island to the other. In actuality, it is one continuous wall separated into convenient locations discovered over years of diving. Again, the locations are listed from south to north.

Maricaibo (120+; E). There are two sections of Maricaibo, and one is marked by an old anchor rope encrusted with bright-colored sponges and coral. It runs like a cable and can be used as a landmark. Large pelagics may be encountered because there is access to open sea. Turtles, large southern rays and



French angelfish at Casa Del Mar.

yards long and scattered with sponges and gorgonians. To traverse the third section you must angle yourself a little west if the current is flowing north. It is best to dive this reef at odd hours so you can avoid "rush hour."

San Juan (60-80; E). This is an advanced dive requiring strong swimming skills as well as attention to depth and direction. Known for swift currents, it is a garden of white flower coral nestled among finger coral. The width of this reef allows side-by-side diving as opposed to the line formation techniques on other reefs. Small craters pock this reef where divers may be for-

blacktip sharks frequent this area. The other section lies in deeper water and should be approached with caution due to currents and depth. It is a rounded wall that starts at about 120 feet and curves to the contour of the island. It feels like a trip around the globe in outer space, and shark sightings are common. I have personally seen manta rays there — an extremely rare occurrence.

Punta Sur (90-120; A). With its spectacular appearance and pattern of jagged pinnacles, it is known as The Cathedral. There are four sections separated by a sloping, sandy bottom. The passageways that penetrate these coral edifices are

rich with schools of glassy sweepers and startling light beams that penetrate the cracks and fissures. The last section of this striking reef culminates into what is known as The Devil's Throat. The entrance begins at 70 feet and descends into a forked exit at approximately 120 feet that is filled with schooling silversides.

Columbia (80-100; D). This section

Coral heads and caverns house nurse sharks. As you fly over the sandy areas, watch for garden eels. Current is generally mild here.

Palancar Caves (60-90; N) is characterized by a sharp drop-off and mild currents. Canyons and tunnels are abundant and a delight to dive. Eagle rays and turtles are commonly encountered here.

Horseshoe (60-90; N) is distinc-

ideal first-time dive for newcomers to Cozumel. Gentle currents make this a pleasure to explore.

LaFrancesa (40-70; N). This is infrequently dived. It is home to large crabs and nurse sharks and ably defended by carpets of hydroid coral to warn the incautious of their buoyancy skills.

Santa Rosa Wall (60-80; D). A classic Caribbean wall located in front of Diamond Resort. Because of its popularity it is best to dive here at odd hours. This stunning wall features jutting coral heads reminiscent of gargoyles, and it is honeycombed with tunnels. Sponges abound. Look for pompano and schools of horse-eyed jacks as the wall tapers off. Current can be swift and tricky here.

Cedral Wall (45-90; A) is a remarkable reef that begins at 45 feet and has the structure and location for strong current. Turtles and eagle rays are frequent here. This reef can be combined with Paso De Cedral.

San Francisco Wall (45-80; N) is a gently sloping wall that lends itself to photography. It has many "duck-ins" and overhangs. Plenty of lobster and queen angelfish.

Punta Tunich Wall (70-100; D) is normally a fast current dive. It features lush vegetation, plenty of finger coral and hydroid coral. Look for turtles in the sandy area toward the beach.

Yucab Wall (80-120; A) begins slightly deeper than the other wall dives. This narrow ridge of finger coral has a spectacular drop-off with large schools of queen angelfish. It ends abruptly. Current is strong here.

Villablanca Wall (55-100; D) is famous for the size and variety of sponges. It is conveniently close to town and is close enough to the shoreline to dive from the beach for the experienced diver.

Barracuda Reef (80-120; E) is located in the northernmost section of Cozumel. The reef is very beautiful but very tricky to dive, even for advanced divers with strong swimming skills. It is a sheer wall filled with the brightest of colors. The current can be ferocious and may have down-currents running 7 knots. I recommend staying very close to the wall because the current may actually pull you away from the edge, and the breaks in the reef create more possibilities of down-currents. Large pelagics are common. Personal dive equipment should include signaling devices such as whistles and dive sausages. 



A large grouper checks out the visitors at Santa Rosa Shallows.

of reef starts a short distance after The Devil's Throat and sports a series of towering coral columns. The drop-off is steep and it tapers into a sloping, sandy bottom. Large groupers and turtles patrol this reef, which is so large you would have to make three separate dives to cover everything. The interior ridge is separated from the main ridge by a sandy passage and is much shallower.

tively horseshoe-shaped. In the center of the curve is the platform which once was the base for the statue of Christ now located in the National Park of Chankanaab, where it had to be removed to after Hurricane Gilbert tipped it over. It is flanked by impressive coral forming a dramatic wall.

Palancar Gardens (40-70; N). Lush with gorgonians and marine life it is an

COZUMEL

PARADISE IN COZUMEL

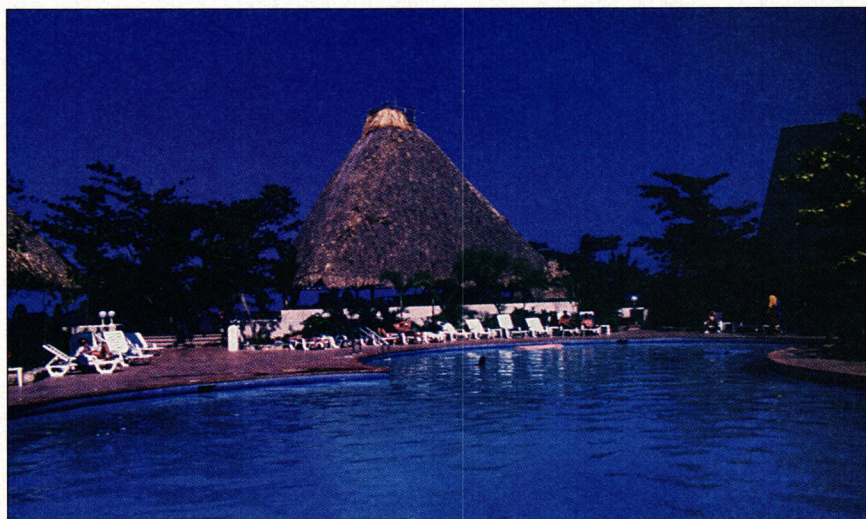


Photo: Denise Mattia

Want a Caribbean vacation at a resort that combines the luxury of a cruise with versatility of being on land? The Paradisus Cozumel (formerly Melia Mayan Paradisus), located on the northwest side of the island of Cozumel, is the ideal spot to choose whatever activity (or inactivity) you have in mind at an affordable price.

There are 180 deluxe air-conditioned units at this five-star resort, each with a terrace or balcony, satellite TV and phone. The accommodations are just a few minutes walk to the long stretch of glistening white beach, the hotel facilities, restaurants and bars.

At Paradisus, you can swim in one of two pools, snorkel in the ocean, take an introductory lesson in scuba diving, go windsurfing, kayaking or sail a sunfish. There are two courts for tennis buffs, step and water aerobics classes, daily bicycle and horseback riding tours, and the full-sized gym and steam bath is open until 9 p.m. You can end your busy schedule with a nightly show, disco or karaoke at the Club Fantasia.

No vacation is complete without excellent meals and snacks, and Paradisus provides fine dining from about 6 a.m. until 11 p.m. A delicious variety of dishes are served buffet style for breakfast, lunch and dinner at La Isla. Giant, gaily colored papier mache fish and parrots float suspended from the building's vaulted, thatched roof. The room

Photo: Denise Mattia



is surrounded on three sides with floor-to-ceiling windows and by a portico set with additional tables for those who want to take full advantage of the ocean or pool-side breezes.

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Paradisus

In case sun, air and exercise (or an iron will at breakfast) has rendered you weak and wobbly, La Iguana is open from 11 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. This rustic snack bar is on the beach and serves light meals and "in-betweens."

Tropical flowers line the path which leads to a bridge across a lagoon and into Cafe Paraiso, the resort's gourmet restaurant. The room's singular illumination and focal point is a six-foot, freshwater tank with exotic Yucatan fish gliding through a miniature Mayan ruin. The warm glow of candles enhances elegant table settings. Dining is table d'hote—usually a choice of appetizers, soups or salads, entrees and desserts—all exquisitely prepared and served. Reservations are required and a dress code is suggested.

The service is impeccable at Paradisus Cozumel, and the bilingual staff is ever-attentive. They're helpful in arranging tours and giving information about this friendly island. The town of San Miguel is only 3.6 miles away and is easily and reasonably accessible by taxi. In addition to the multitude of shops and restaurants, the Museum of Cozumel is definitely worth a visit to learn about its reefs, its Mayan history and the island's development. If you rent a car or scooter and tour the island on your own, stop at San Gervasio, the most notable Mayan ruin. And don't worry about staying out late. The town is safe and nightlife continues until about 3 a.m.

Even though there are sufficient programs at Paradisus Cozumel to keep both children and adults content, many guests come to dive Cozumel's southwestern section—one of the great barrier reefs of the world. The staff is happy to arrange dive trips with Caribbean Divers International, a newly organized shop managed by Caesar Zepeda. Small groups under careful supervision are taken to the famous Palancar Reef and to Santa Rosa wall. Certification courses are offered as well.

Whether traveling with your family on a holiday, in a group, at a convention or on a honeymoon, young, or young at heart, the Paradisus Cozumel is the perfect place to rev up or wind down in luxury. It's well named—Paradise—in Cozumel.

—Denise Mattia

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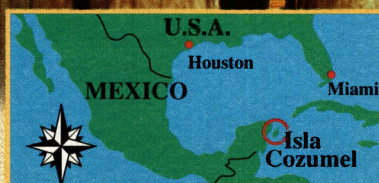
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Glide with the fish through the wonderful coral reefs of the "Arrecifes de Cozumel" National Marine Park.

Roam through lush forests and immerse yourself into the turquoise waters of the ecological reserves of Chankanaab, Xel-ha and Xcaret.

Visit Isla Cozumel, Mexico's Caribbean Dream.



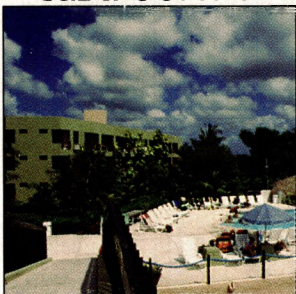
Great vacations in paradise begin with a professional travel agent.

For more information RSVP #84
© Cozumel Trust Fund



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Casa del Mar



La Ceiba



Cozumel's

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Shore Diving
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3 Days Diving



8 Days/7 Nights
5 Days Diving

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\$299 09/01/97 - 12/20/97 \$459

FROM
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PP/Dbl./DIVER

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3 Days Diving



8 Days/7 Nights
5 Days Diving

\$418 02/01/97 - 03/30/97 \$659
\$369 03/31/97 - 08/31/97 \$586
\$349 09/01/97 - 12/20/97 \$549

*Non-Diver/Single/Triple Rates Upon Request.

*Valid U.S. Drivers License Required For Car Rental.

*Valid C-Card Required For Diving.

*Restrictions May Apply. *Price Subject To Change.

INCLUSIONS:

Hotel Accommodations
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email: dive@neosoft.com

<http://tropical.scubamaster.com>

TROPICAL TOURS, INC.
"Mexico's Dive Travel Specialists"

1-800-711-4700

For more information RSVP #48

ALL-INCLUSIVE EL COZUMELEÑO BEACH RESORT



The most relaxing **ALL-INCLUSIVE** beach resort in the Caribbean, located directly on the best beach of **COZUMEL ISLAND**. Our facilities are excellent for families. You can choose from a variety of activity programs or simply relax while your children are having fun at the kid's camp. Enjoy exciting beach activities, water sports such as snorkeling, scuba clinics at the pool, windsurfing, plus minigolf and tennis, nightly entertainment, and more. We add more value to your vacation with taxes, tips and room service included. Just five minutes from the airport and San Miguel town.

Playa Santa Pilar KM 4.5 North Zone

77600 Cozumel, Q. ROO Mexico

Phone: (987) 20050 Fax: (987) 20381

Toll free: 1-800-437-3923 or hotelcoz@cozumel.rce.com.mx

For more information RSVP #94

Cozumel
RSVP
#85



CLUB COZUMEL CARIBE
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DIVING IS INCLUDED

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Diving is not included in Gardenview rooms.

April 16 to Dec. 20, 1997

CLASSIFICATION	SGL	DBL	TRPL
GARDENVIEW	129	99	99
JR. OCEAN	149	129	119
CORNER	159	139	129
MASTER	169	149	139

<http://www.barbachano.com>

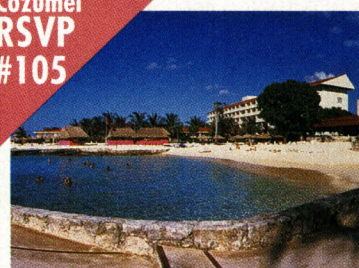
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800-327-2254



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Cozumel
RSVP
#105



**PRESIDENTE
INTER-CONTINENTAL
& SCUBA DU**

Experience the ultimate scuba diving at the island's only AAA/Four Diamond resort. Located on the south side of the island near all major dive sites. Dive packages available. Scuba Du dive shop and boats located on premises. Beach dives directly from the hotel pier into the Caribbean's most beautiful coral reefs. Full range of water sports and activities. Call for reservations **1-800-327-0200**.

800-327-0200

PRESIDENTE
INTER-CONTINENTAL
Cozumel

Scuba Du

SOL CABAÑAS DEL CARIBE HOTEL



Where, on the Island of Swallows – the Mayan name for Cozumel – does the mystery shrouded past of the Mayans meet an unhurried, relaxing present-day Cozumel? Just 2 miles out of the bustling town of San Miguel at the Sol Cabañas del Caribe.

While Cozumel's spectacular underwater scenery is the main reason divers visit, getting away from the hustle and bustle of daily living is an equally important reason. One of the best places on the island to enjoy a little reality escape is the Sol Cabañas del Caribe. For starters, the 48-room hotel – that also offers 8 cozy, private beachfront cabanas – protects guests from unnecessary outer-

world intrusions; there are no phones or televisions at the intimate retreat located amidst lush gardens overlooking a



pristine white beach and the clear blue Cozumelian waters.

Besides availing yourself of the wonders of Cozumel dive sites – Chankanaab, Tormentos, Palancar Reef, El Cedral, Santa Rosa and others equally famed in the diving world – you, or your non-diving companion can

opt to simply loll about the beach or pool, or choose from a wide variety of water sports to enjoy, along with the excellent international cuisine, local and traditional specialties, and succulent seafood served at Sol Cabañas del Caribe.

If landside attractions are on your list, rent a jeep or scooter and explore the Mayan ruins at the seaport of Tulum, the jungle ruins of Coba or the famed Mayan city Chichen Itza. And if it's a dose of action you need – the hotel is but two miles from the boutiques, restaurants and nightlife of San Miguel.

Sol Cabañas del Caribe is a vacation paradise, tucked away on the pristine beaches of Mexico's Caribbean island; Once you've been there you'll never want to leave – and once you leave you'll always want to come back.

Special summer packages are available starting at \$178 per person that include diving, 3-nights, breakfast and transfers. Contact your local travel agent or 888-341-5993 for more information

Sol Cabañas del Caribe,
Carretera Costera Norte KM 5.1,
Cozumel, Quintana Roo 77600,
Mexico;

phone 011-52-987-20411;
fax 011-52-987-21599.

888-341-5993

COZUMEL

LA CEIBA HOTEL



La Ceiba is a five-star hotel with two swimming pools, excellent location, and all rooms have a spectacular view of the ocean. Dive packages start at just \$261 and may include meals at either La Ceiba or the nearby sister hotel, Casa Del Mar.

Casa Del Mar, a very affordable four-star hotel, is directly across the street from its own beach, known as "The Diver's Choice". Dive packages from \$203 offer 4 days/3 nights with two days of



DEL MAR AQUATICS DIVE OPERATOR

boat diving. Casa del Mar is also operating the new meal plan with exchange privileges between hotels.

Del Mar Aquatics, the most complete dive operation on the island, is equipped with the fastest and safest fleet on the island. Conducted by professionals Dive Masters, led by Tony Castillo, Del Mar Aquatics provides a 100% satisfaction guarantee on all your diving, snorkeling or fishing trips.

CASA DEL MAR HOTEL



So, if you like diving, snorkeling, fishing or just strolling on the beach, call today:

PHONE 1-888-DEL-MAR3
1-800-435-3240
1-800-437-9609

FAX 1-800-235-5892

E-Mail: sombrero@airmail.net
www.mexicoweb.com/sombrero



888-DEL-MAR3

ALLEGRO RESORTS

COZUMEL & PLAYA DEL CARMEN



recognized names in value dive vacations in the Mexican Yucatan.



At Allegro Resorts you can be sure you'll receive the finest all-inclusive vacation value. Ranked the number 2 dive resort world wide by Rodale's 1997 reader survey, the Allegro Diamond Resort in Cozumel offers the diver comfortable accommodations, delicious food, great beverages, and a variety of activities to insure the best possible vacation value. In Cozumel, Dive Palancar operates a fleet of modern uncrowded dive boats minutes from the reefs. This close proximity enables Dive Palancar to offer up to 6 single tank dive trips daily including advance level, night dives, and soon nitrox diving. You're diving an hour per trip, perfect for families and travelers with non-diving companions.

Across the channel, Allegro operates another Diamond and a

Caribbean Village Resort. Both offer the same fine service, food & beverage, and activity packages as their sister resort in Cozumel, with the addition of a championship golf course. Here Dive Palancar offers a variety of



diving options including great off shore reefs, day trips to Cozumel's walls, and the incredible experience of cenote cavern diving.

Call us today and find out why Allegro Resorts and Dive Palancar have become the

U.S. and Canada Reservations and Information

12200 N.W. Fwy., Suite 519
Houston, Texas 77092

800-433-0885

Fax 713-680-2306

email:

divepal@dsi-divetours.com

Internet:

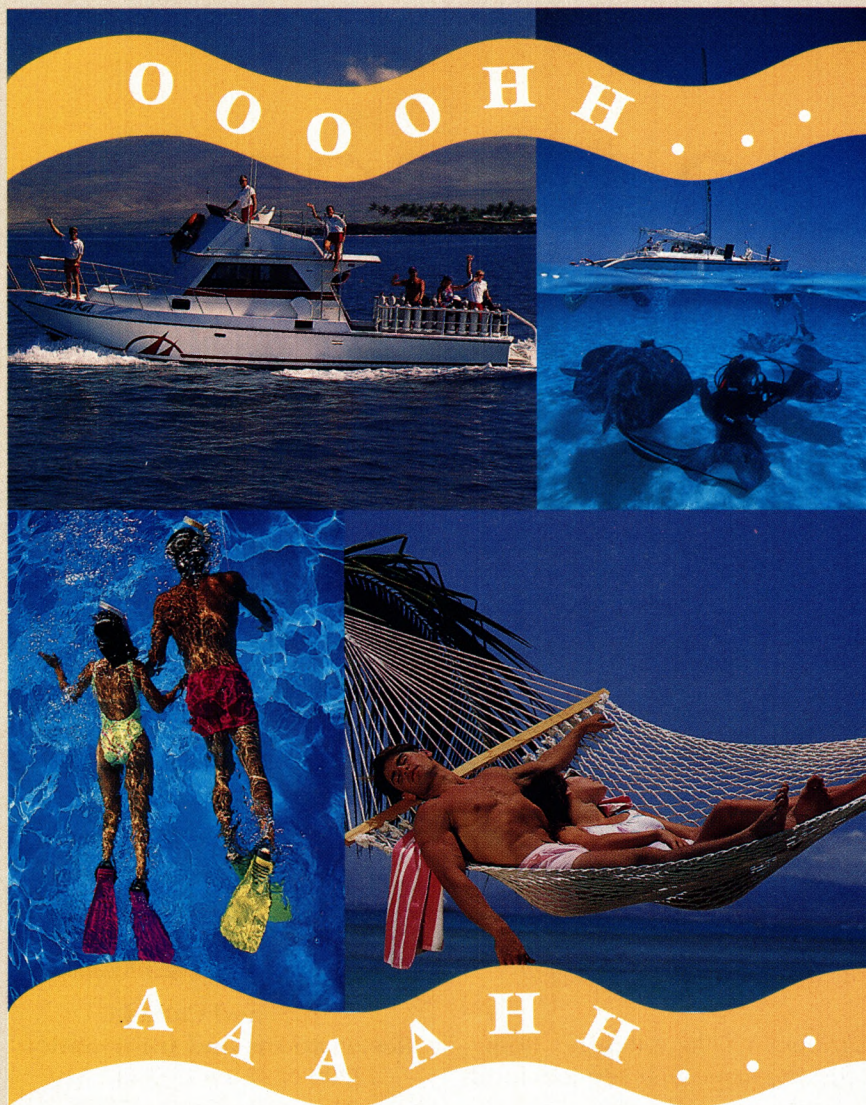
www.dsi-divetours/divepal

Mexico Reservations and Information

Fax: 011-529-872-5094

Voice: 011-529-872-3443





RED SAIL SPORTS

has locations in the world's best dive waters — the Caribbean and Pacific.
If you want unforgettable diving, friendly service and custom built dive boats,
dive with Red Sail Sports. Dive packages available starting at
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World-wide reservations:

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Advertised rate is based on double occupancy, valid 4/21–12/15/97. Package rates vary at each location. Call for pricing details.

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ARUBA THE BAHAMAS CURAÇAO GRAND CAYMAN HAWAII

For more information RSVP #16

DZUL HA WATERSPORTS

Customized diving, beach club, bar & grill. Featuring the islands' best shallow reef for snorkeling and beach dives. All PADI certified staff and instructions. Snorkel adventures to the famous Palancar and Columbia reefs. Just 4 miles south of downtown

011-52-987-2-13-85

U.S. FAX (214) 394-1695



RSVP #38

PASCUAL'S SCUBA CENTER

Dive with Pascual Tun who has over 20 years of professional diving and service in Cozumel. Pascual's shop has two dive boats—Fat Grouper and Fat Grouper II. Pascual has the friendliest operation in Cozumel. Affiliated with the Hyperbaric Chamber Treatment. Instruction available at all levels. Morning and afternoon trips. Customized diving.

176 Rosado Salas in Cozumel. Open 8 am - 9 pm.

800-969-1585
U.S. Fax (510) 538-8508

U.S. Rep: Eduardo Zuniga



RSVP #36

Grand Cayman
RSVP
#3



RADISSON RESORT

Celebrating our 7th year as the hotel's "in-house" dive operator Don Foster's continues its respected tradition of providing a fun and safe dive experience for each guest. The Radisson's appealing new look is "diver friendly" and invites guests to return again and again.

Packages start at \$569.00 per person for accommodations and diving.

For reservations and information
fax: (972) 722-6511 or call

800-83-DIVER

E-mail: dfdus@airmail.net



DON FOSTER'S Dive

One minute you're stepping off the plane and the next minute, it seems, you're stepping into the clearest, warmest water in the Caribbean. That's Sunset House, and that's why divers have been coming back again and again since 1958. Back then, when Hebe Connors first opened her little hotel on the west shore of Grand Cayman, she had the pick of the Island's prime shorediving sites. And she chose well;

*You fly in, check in and dive in.
You can't beat Sunset House.*



Sunset House is just five minutes from town with a teeming reef that starts right at the water's edge and a front row view of the setting sun. Other hotels simply can't match it. Of course, things are a touch more sophisticated these days. Along with a fleet of seven custom-built dive boats you'll now find 59 rooms, a dive shop, a boutique, a restaurant and what many locals say is the Island's best bar. Plus, Cathy Church's world-famous Photo Center is at Sunset House. So check-in with us for an unbeatable dive vacation. Call 1-800 854 4767 or 809 949 7111 (8am - 5pm EST). Or write Sunset House, PO Box 479, Grand Cayman, BWI. **CIW&A**

For more information RSVP #22

Main photo: David Wolfe. U/W photo: Cathy Church



BB&P

Cayman Islands
RSVP
#98



LITTLE CAYMAN

The Southern Cross Club, a fish and dive resort, is a natural seaside preserve and secluded island hideaway. You will step from your private beach cottage, one of only ten that dapple the white sand at waters edge, onto our comfort-able dive boat, "Coral Star". Experience the famous Bloody and Jackson Bay walls with a maximum of ten divers. After a day of diving, snor-

keling, fishing, kayaking, nature trails, or world class relaxing join the other guests at the Loggerhead tiki bar to share the days adventures over conch fritters or baked coconut. Under new ownership and management, our primitive luxury is unique in the Caribbean providing an unforgettable experience. Enjoyment comes naturally at the Southern Cross Club.

We now offer Nitrox diving and certifications through IANTD. Come visit us and get your Nitrox certification. Fax (809) 948-1098, e-mail: scc@candw.ky, <http://scubacentral.com/sc> c.html.

800-899-CLUB (2582)



Cayman Islands
RSVP
#57



AQUA'NAUTS DIVING

Want to have fun on your dive vacation in a relaxed, friendly, family atmosphere? Then your choice must be Aqua'nauts when diving in the Cayman Islands. Let them arrange every detail from your hotel accommodations to your entire diving schedule before you set foot on the island. Aqua'nauts will free you from those inflexible dive boat schedules, overdived sites, and overcrowded dive boats. The ultimate dive vacation is only a phone call away on their convenient toll free number.

800-357-2212

**Seven Mile Beach
ph: 345-945-1990**

**Morgan's Harbour
ph: 345-945-1953**



Grand Cayman
RSVP
#3



HOLIDAY INN

Don Foster's is proud to announce our partnership with this popular 7 Mile Beach Hotel. Our full service dive and retail shop offers a variety of watersports activities. Our boats depart directly from the beach and all packages include a daily buffet breakfast—a diver's favorite.

Packages start at \$477.00 per person for accommodations and diving.

Looking for an economical getaway? Just a few steps from our Royal Palms beach dive shop, we also offer condos with all the comforts of home in a cozy style atmosphere. Packages start at \$450.00 per person.

For reservations and information
fax: (972) 722-6511 or call:

800-83-DIVER

E.mail: cfcdus@airmail.net



DON FOSTER'S Dive

WESTERN CARIBBEAN

The following is a partial list of dive shops and operators in the Western Caribbean

BELIZE

**BELIZE DIVE
CENTER/ULTIMATE
DIVE TRAVEL**
800-737-3483;
FAX: 630-616-0727

BLUE MARLIN LODGE
800-798-1558;
FAX: 954-351-9740

GLOBAL TRAVEL CLUB
011-44-1268-541732;
FAX: 011-44-1268-
542275

SOULSHINE RESORT
800-890-6082

COZUMEL

ALLEGRO RESORTS
800-443-0885;
FAX: 713-680-2306
EMAIL ADDRESS:
divepal@dsdivetours.com
www.dsdivetours.com
divepal

BARBACHANO TOURS
800-327-2254;
FAX: 305-670-9695
EMAIL ADDRESS:
mayareef@netpoint.net

**DZUL-HA
WATERSPORTS**
011-52-987-21385;
FAX: 214-394-1695

**EL COZUMELENO
HOTEL**
800-437-3923;
FAX: 011-52-987-20381

**LA CEIBA,
CASA DEL MAR,
DEL MAR AQUATICS**
800-DEL-MAR3;
FAX: 800-235-5892
EMAIL ADDRESS:
sombrero@airmail.net

**LA CEIBA & CASA DEL
MAR YUCATANZA/
TROPICAL TOURS**
800-711-4700;
FAX: 713-855-9139
EMAIL ADDRESS:
diver@neosoft.com

PARADISUS COZUMEL
800-341-5993;
FAX: 011-52-982-21599

PASCUAL'S SCUBA CENTER

800-969-1585;
FAX: 510-538-8508

**PRESIDENTE INTER-
CONTINENTAL**
800-327-0200

**SOL CABANAS DEL
CARIBE/ CARIBOTELS**
888-341-5993;
FAX: 011-52-987-21599

CAYMAN

AQUA'NAUTS DIVING
800-357-2212 OR 345-
945-1990

**CAYMAN DIVING
LODGE/ULTIMATE
DIVE TRAVEL**
800-737-3483;
FAX: 630-616-0727

**DON FOSTERS DIVE
CAYMAN**
800-83-DIVER;
FAX: 214-722-6511

RED SAIL SPORTS
800-255-6425

**SOUTHERN CROSS
CLUB**
809-948-1099;
FAX: 809-948-1098

SUNSET HOUSE
800-854-4767 OR 809-
949-7111

HONDURAS/ BAY ISLANDS

**BAY ISLANDS BEACH
RESORT**
800-4-ROATAN;
FAX: 407-624-7751

**FANTASY ISLAND
BEACH RESORT**
800-676-2826;
FAX: 813-835-4569

**PETER HUGHES
DIVING**
305-669-9391;
FAX: 305-669-9475

ROATAN CHARTER
800-282-8932;
FAX: 904-588-4158

UTILA REEF RESORT
800-263-9876;
FAX: 504-262-0105
800-525-3833

CAYMAN ISLANDS

CAYMAN DIVING LODGE



The Caymans. Been there, done that, right? Well, not if you've never dived the East End, and certainly not if you never stayed at the Cayman Diving Lodge, a family-owned dive lodge run by divers for divers who love the sport and love a good vacation.

Diving the East End of Grand Cayman is like diving the Caribbean back in the old days ... pristine, uncrowded, unpretentious and exciting all at once. Spectacular drop-offs, incredibly clean and exciting walls plunging vertically from around 50 feet into the blue abyss. The mid-reef dives may possibly be more awe inspiring and they are what distinguishes the East End from Cayman's other diving. Generally between 50 and 65 feet they feature intricate cut-throughs, caverns and tunnels ... a labyrinth of coral passageways winding through the reef.

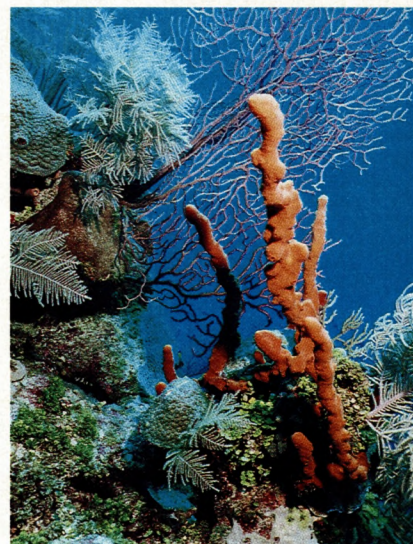


Cayman Diving Lodge is your passport to the wonders of East End diving. Located just a 35 minute drive from Georgetown, the Cayman Diving Lodge is light years away

800-737-DIVE (3483)



from the hustle and bustle of Seven Mile Beach. This is a small diving lodge and you'll discover peace, relaxation, no crowds, no tourism and unparalleled camaraderie. The Lodge's dive boats are spacious 45 foot custom-designed boats with a 16 foot beam that allows divers plenty of room around the centrally located tanks and benches - and are completely equipped with freshwater showers.



No, if it's an adventure getaway you're looking for, you don't have to travel to the ends of the earth ... just to the East End of Grand Cayman and the Cayman Diving Lodge ... where country-style Cayman hospitality and relaxation meets the best, most unsullied and exciting diving in the Caribbean.

Ultimate Dive Travel can arrange airfare, car rental and airport transfers. Reservations can be made by calling toll-free 800 737-DIVE (3483); fax (U.S.): 630 616-0727.

**Belize
RSVP
#72**



BLUE MARLIN LODGE

Basically, we have it all here waiting for you. We want to share our sanctuary with you, so loosen your tie, kick off your shoes, and wiggle your toes in the sand because we don't have any telephones or traffic out here, just clear blue Caribbean as far as the mind can wander. We welcome you to **Blue Marlin Lodge!**

Come and enjoy ... our island is your island

Special land and diving packages **starting at \$599.00*** pp Dbl Occup. Air inclusive Packages also available

*All Inclusive Packages 3 nights/2 days include local transfers, accommodations, three meals daily, 4 dives, tanks, weights, room tax, vat tax and complimentary drink.

DIVE BELIZE

On the Reef...South Water Caye, Belize

A hidden paradise for divers, anglers, and beach combers. International: 011-501-52-2243 Fax: 011-501-52-2296. Call or fax (954) 351-9740

800-798-1558



**Bay Island
RSVP
#30**



UTILA REEF RESORT SPECIAL

Eight pampered guests will delight in their own island tree house, complete with air-conditioning, fans, louvered sliding doors providing dramatic seaside views, hot water and private baths. Delicious American- and Canjun-style meals served buffet-style. Utila Reef Resort is a diver's

dream come true. Dive Willie's Hole, Black Hills, Blackish Point and other favorite seamounts. Best shore diving in the Bay Islands. 8 days/7 nights, 3 tank dives daily, unlimited shore diving, all meals and snacks, \$795 per person, dbl. occ. All rooms are deluxe.

Email: Lndfall@aol.com,
<http://ecotravel.com/lanfall>.
Contact

**800-263-9876
or
800-525-3833
(C.A. 510-794-1599)**



**Belize
RSVP
#29**



SOULSHINE RESORT

Looking for a great Caribbean Adventure? Soulshine Resort lets you set your own pace!

- Restaurant
- Pool
- Rainforest Tours
- Monkey River Tours
- Snorkeling
- Diving

www.http.soulshine.com

800-890-6082



**Worldwide
RSVP
#295**



ULTIMATE DIVE TRAVEL

The best in personal service. Diving the following:

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- BONAIRE
- CAYMAN ISLANDS
- COSTA RICA
- COZUMEL
- FIJI
- ROATAN
- SOLMAR V
- TURKS & CAICOS

One call and we will take care of everything for you. It's your vacation, relax!

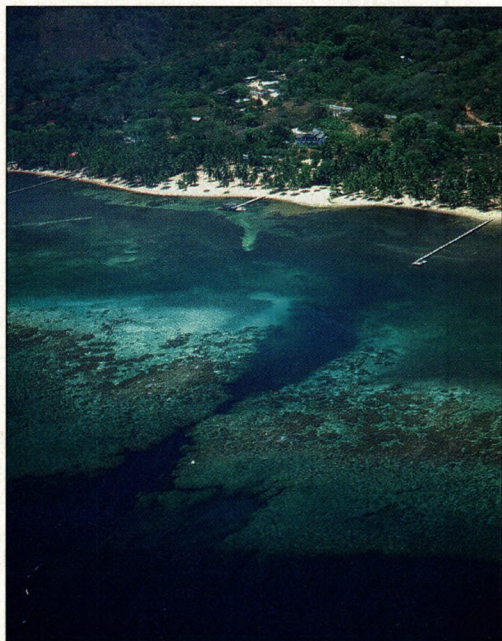
800-737-DIVE (3483)

**or fax us at:
630-616-0727**



Bay Islands Beach Resort

Escape to your own private dive resort



At the Bay Islands Beach Resort on Roatan, Ted and Cam O'Brien have created the perfect balance between a highly professional full-service dive operation and a laid-back, intimate bed-and-breakfast style dive resort. With only 24 - 38 guests each week, it is easy for them to adjust schedules, meals, and activities to their guests' desires. The resort's highly successful "Rent The Entire Resort" plan allows dive clubs, dive shops, group leaders and scuba instructors use of the resort's facilities and staff. An ideal place to take groups!

Bay Islands Beach Resort is 44 acres of panoramic waterfront and hillside within the Marine Reserve. A two-story Spanish-style plantation house and beach villas sit amidst beautifully landscaped property with fruit and nut trees, flowers, and towering coconut palms.

Just off the beach is the famous Spooky Channel, one of the best shore (and boat) dives on the island. Swim

through an eerie crack in the reef which opens onto the breathtaking wall. Or snorkel along the pristine reef and view the spectacular display of fishes and corals.

Eight-day packages include seven nights' air-conditioned accommodations, 16 boat dives (two in the morning, one in the afternoon, one night dive), unlimited shore dives and three delicious meals a day. Festivities featured are the Tabiyana Beach picnic trip, Land Crab Safari, the traditional lobster buffet and Limbo and Punta Party with music and dancing on the beach.

BOOK IT! Group leaders call for "Rent The Entire Resort" details. An individual seven-night package is \$725 pp/do; non-divers, \$650 pp/do. Call your local dive shop or Bay Islands Beach Resort toll-free at (800) 4 ROATAN or (561) 624-5774, fax (561) 624-7751.

For more information RSVP #139

GLOBAL TRAVEL CLUB

Dive the fabulous Mayan Barrier Reef in the crystal clear waters of the Caribbean Corridor from Cozumel to the Bay Islands. NEW FOR 1997: Diving Timeshares in Belize.

For a vacation or property in paradise:
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Fax: 011-44-1268-542275
E-Mail: global@online.rednet.co.uk

011-44-1268-541732

RSVP #76

USE THE RSVP

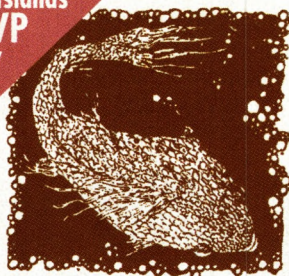
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FREE INFORMATION

FROM *SPORT DIVER*

ADVERTISERS

Bay Islands
RSVP
#37



HONDURAS BAY ISLANDS

Whether you choose Roatan, Guanaja, Utila or all three of the Bay Islands as your official dive site, let Roatan Charter help you create a customized dive package that's perfect for you. Explore the world's second largest Barrier reef while choosing from an array of fine resorts and diving live-aboards, as well as wall, wreck and night diving. Roatan Charter has specialized in Honduras and the Bay Islands since 1981. Call us today for individual color brochures and detailed itineraries.

800-282-8932

Roatan
RSVP
#102



FANTASY ISLAND BEACH RESORT

Fantasy Island Beach Resort—"The Best of Roatan." A full-service dive operation and amenity-filled leisure-class retreat off the south shore of Roatan. Discover nature trails and the world's second largest reef system. \$896 per week, all meals, AC rooms, three dives daily, night dives, watersports and airport transfers. Special for \$675 pp, available after April 11, 1997.

Reservations/Information:

5353 W. Tyson Ave Tampa Ave

Tampa FL 83611

FAX: (813) 835-4569

World Wide Web:

<http://www.empg.com/fantasy-island>

800-676-2826

Story by Katie Schickel
Photo by Clara Bement

HARBOUR ISLAND

DEEP NARROW
GROOVES OF
PLATE CORAL
SIT IN 120
FEET, JUST
A STONES
THROW FROM
LAND

Located just north of Eleuthera Island in the Bahamas, Harbour Island offers some of the most varied diving in the Caribbean, possibly anywhere. In just a few days you can dive everything from shallow wrecks and reefs to intricate blue holes. You can plunge into deep coral canyons or mini walls while drifting along at 10 knots. The geography of the land had made for a diving playground in which the swing set, jungle gym, monkey bars and slides are all within a couple miles of each other.

Most of our dives at Harbour Island were along the Devil's Backbone, a barrier reef situated on the bay side of the island. The reef here is shallow and porous, forming caverns and swim-throughs around at every turn. Grouper and mutton snapper hang out in these holes, gorging on the abundant schools of silverside minnows. Because the reef is not marked, you won't want to venture into this area without a guide.

Roseanne Liva, owner of Valentine's Resort, one of the two dive outfits on the island, has spent the past three years discovering and recording the wreckage beneath Eleuthera's waters. She first led us to the *Cienfuegas* wreck, a passenger liner that went down in 1897 while on her way from Cuba to New York via Nassau. As you swim over the Swiss-cheese mounds of coral to get to the wreck, you pass by a ballast pile from a 1760s shipwreck. The

ballast field is approximately 300 feet long, and the ship's original timbers are exposed in areas. Pottery shards, brass fittings and portholes are still being found on the wreck site that sits in 35 feet of water.

A short distance from the *Cienfuegas*, the Wreck of the Potatoes and Onions — so named for its cargo — spreads its steel body over a large area. Two massive boilers are still in place, making a tunnel for divers to swim through.

On the ocean side of the island, deep narrow grooves of plate coral sit in 120 feet, just a stone's throw from land. Black coral overhangs the plates and an occasional reef shark makes a timid appearance. At the end of one of these long canyons we came across "the arch," a coral bridge in 110 feet of water. Hundreds of thousands of years of polyps growing upward have created the massive structure.

For advanced divers, the Current Cut is a trip worth making. About a one-hour boat ride from Harbour Island, the Cut rips at 10 knots, sending divers hurtling past a coral gap. Blink once and you'll miss the gap.

Sea Gardens, another reef site on the ocean

side, gave us a glimpse of yet another type of area dive. This horse-shoe-shaped maze of reef mounds is home to a resident green turtle. With well over 100 feet of visibility, the Gardens are a spectacular sight. Nassau grouper, black durgon, queen triggerfish and rainbow parrotfish add color and beauty

to the hard and soft corals.

The contours of life above the water are as rich and diverse as the diving below. During the day, you can explore the hilly island entirely on foot. Then, sit down to a Bahamian meal of cracked conch with peas and rice at one of the restaurants in the quaint center of town. And, after a hard day of diving, relax or raise hell at one of the local watering holes, George's or Sea Grass, where Bahamian bands play into the wee hours of the night.

Few places in the world offer the variety of life — and diving — as Harbour Island.



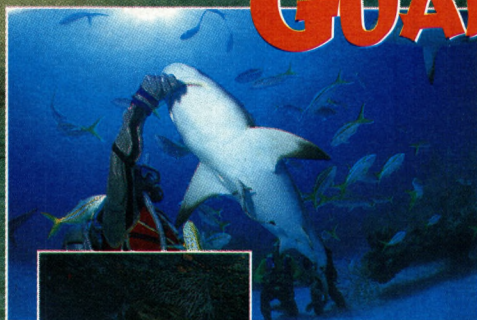
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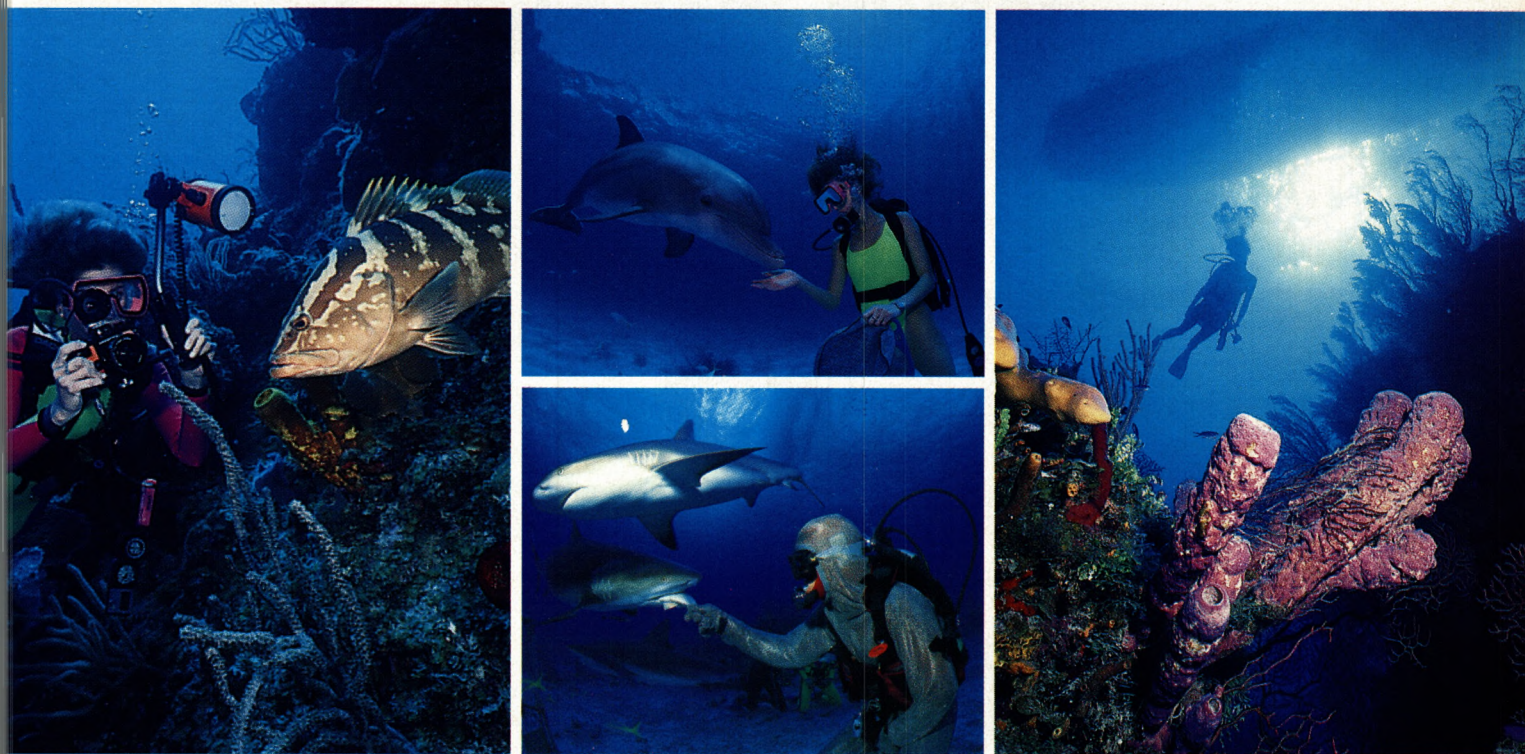
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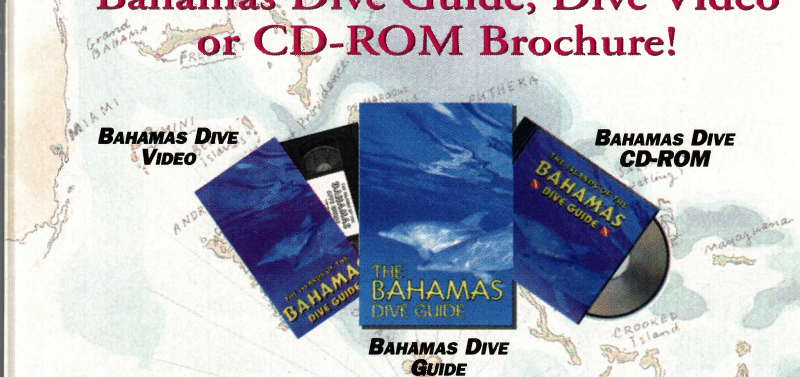


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Story & photo
by Jonathan Bird

HABITAT REEF SHORE DIVE

Habitat Reef is the “backyard” of the brand-new Habitat Resort. And what a reef it is. Until the hotel was built on this remote section of the island, this reef had probably never been dived at all. The coral is as healthy as can be, and the fish life swarm around



A sea horse discovered under the dock.

DESPITE ITS
ACCESSIBILITY,
THIS IS ONE
OF THE
NICEST DIVES
ON CURAÇAO

the divers like clouds of locusts. On one dive I floated in weightless wonder as a school of Creole wrasse numbering in the thousands passed around me like a wall of living fog.

The reef itself is typical of many Curaçao reefs in topography: a shallow reef shelf followed by a steep (but not quite vertical) drop-off plunging to about 150 feet, then a gentler slope down to who-knows-where. I spent most of my time along the drop-off between 30 and 60 feet. Going deeper wasn't necessary to see more marine life, and staying shallow gave me better light and more bottom time.

One of the highlights of the reef was a friend's discovery of a sponge with a bright yellow longlure frogfish on it. Upon closer examination of the

sponge, I discovered a second frogfish, brown in color, and more difficult to see. Each day I checked the sponge and each day both were there, hidden cleverly in some new spot, but always on the same sponge. Another diver found a sea horse in 8 feet of water right below the dock. The reef is absolutely chock full of various kinds of anemones (more than I've ever seen in one spot) as well as many kinds of coral and fishes. I found scorpionfish on nearly every dive, and enjoyed watching the trumpetfish shadow-stalking behind the parrotfish. Morays are common, and one seemed curious about my camera, sticking its head right up to the lens and smiling for a shot or two. Talk about your photographer's dream come true!

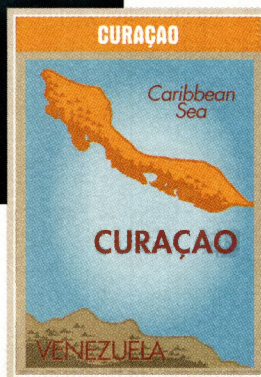
On the night dives I spent my time searching for octopods. With the exception of one night, I found them on every dive. The most memorable encounter involved a clever octopus that figured out that it could hunt using the light from my dive light. In an amazing encounter, I watched as the octopus slithered between two coral heads, grabbed a small sleeping fish and made off with the struggling fish hidden under its arms.

As a reward for helping him find food, the octopus stuck around to let me watch him for a while. My film was gone in a flash, so to speak ... ah, if they only made 72-exposure rolls! Other night dive encounters included a spotted moray; slipper lobsters; a sleeping parrotfish, complete with cocoon; reef squid; and a sea wasp (box jelly), which I discovered by accident (ouch).

Visibility is based on the season and the weather, just like anywhere, but visibility around Curaçao is about the same as Bonaire — 100-plus feet under good conditions, but generally at least 75 feet. Since Habitat Reef is situated on the calmer west end of the southern side of the island, the visibility is always the best it will be any-

where on the island. I never had visibility worse than 75 feet on the reef.

While Curaçao boasts many fine resorts, reefs, secluded beaches and diving opportunities, sometimes the best reefs are the ones you can dive enough to get familiar with. In spite of its ease of accessibility and lack of a catchy name, Habitat Reef is clearly one of the nicest dives on Curaçao. Anyone planning a trip to this somewhat undiscovered diving island should consider checking out Habitat and its incredible “backyard.”



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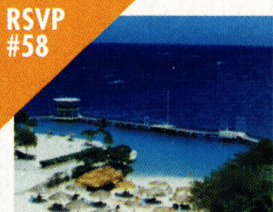
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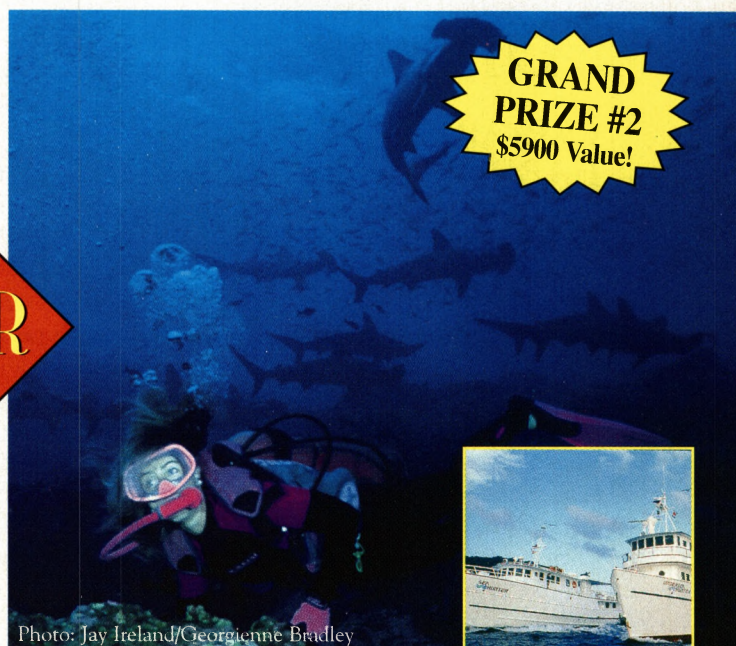


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Story & photo
by Clay Coleman

HOME IS WHERE THE REEF IS

Bonaire, the self-proclaimed diver's paradise: I was so familiar with the island from all the magazine press that I felt as if I knew it well, even though I had yet to visit it.

Our plane landed well after dark, so I didn't get a real look at the place until the following morning. Our home for this trip was Buddy Dive — a new resort nestled between the Bonaire stalwarts of The Sand Dollar Resort and Captain Don's Habitat. I rose early the following morning and rushed to the balcony to have my first good look at Bonaire while my wife, Sharon, struggled to heat water for our first cups of coffee using a microwave flaunting cryptic, Dutch icons and instructions.

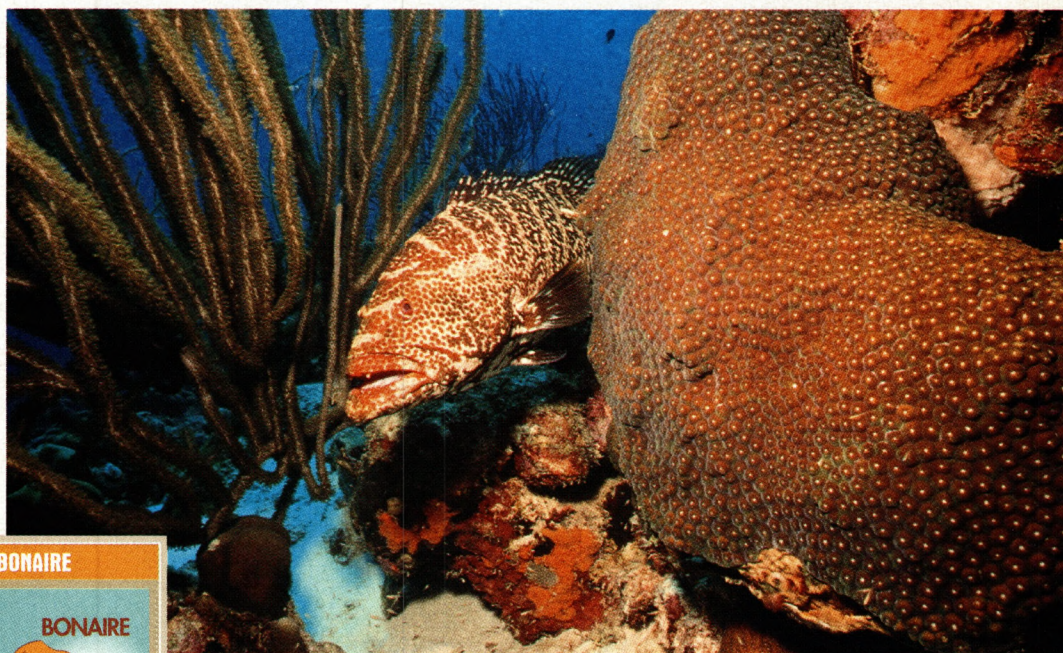
As my eyes feasted on the clear blue Caribbean practically at our doorstep and the small island of Klein Bonaire beckoning a short distance away, I noticed a pair of birds flitting about on one of the large cacti situated on the premises. A quick glance at a guide to Bonaire provided a positive I.D. — a Caribbean parakeet. Another small bird landed on the balcony of the room next door — a bananaquit.

So, before my first cup of java on my first visit to Bonaire, I had seen two species of wildlife I had never seen before — with funky spellings to boot.

It took us little time to make our way to the efficient dive operation at Buddy Dive. After paperwork formalities, we were encouraged to make a dive at the reef in front of the resort, appropriately named Buddy's Reef, before we started with any boat or remote shore diving. We knew, of course, that this dive was to assure the Buddy Dive personnel that we posed no extraordinary threat to ourselves or the reef, and we were anxious to get it over with so we could move on to the good stuff. We shouldn't have been so presumptuous.

The lip of Buddy's Reef starts a scant 150 feet

from the Buddy Dive pier and slopes gently to depths beyond 100 feet. We were first impressed by the health of the coral, and then by the abundance of life on the reef. The dive reminded me of the fanciful depictions on those "dive the Caribbean" T-shirts where every possible fish in the ocean is bunched together: Large spotted morays lurked in crevices; tiger groupers lined up at cleaning stations; swarms of chromis clouded our vision; juvenile spotted drums swam in little circles while their parents hid in the shadows; a gang of ruffian



A tiger grouper at a cleaning station.



blue tangs rushed in to wreak havoc on coral head after coral head. The dive was a *Who's-Who* of Caribbean diving, an overabundance of the ordinary.

While we did eventually dive several sites on Klein Bonaire and elsewhere on the main island of Bonaire, I found myself returning again and again to Buddy's Reef. I dove it every night of my stay on the island, often in the close company of large tarpon and tarpon snook; and the night shift was as plentiful and varied as the day diving had been. Anemones with resident shrimp abounded, arrow crabs postured from the coral, and even an orange ball anemone was found right in front of the resort.

Even a sleepwalker will eventually find a good dive site on Bonaire. That being the case, why not dive where home is?

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Story by Nelson Campbell
Photo by Ben Joubert

SABA: CARIBBEAN SEA'S QUEEN

With no crowds and no beaches, Saba is a sanctuary possessed of unequalled natural beauty and superior diving. It is a haven that has escaped rampant commercialism while still maintaining a comfortable infrastructure to support the traveling diver. Saba lies only 28 miles south of St. Maartens but its sense of remoteness and pastoral-yet-rugged elegance are due to its alpine landscape and intimate scale, not a result of its locale.

As you fly toward Saba on the small DeHavilland STOL (Short Take Off and Landing), its promontory Mount Scenery will likely be partially obscured by clouds. You may find yourself wondering if Michael Crichton visited this island while conceiving *Jurassic Park*.

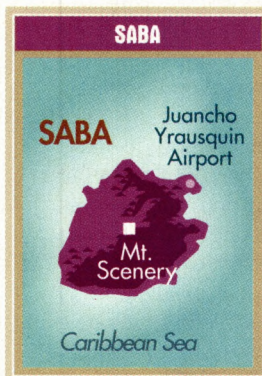
Saba's airstrip is the shortest commercial runway in the world, only 1,200 feet long. You can't miss the sheer cliff on three sides, but you better hope you do. If you ever imagined yourself making aircraft carrier landings after last watching *Top Gun*, this is as close as you can get without going to flight school. It's also better than any ride at Disneyland, if only because it's the real thing. When the time has come for your departing flight, be sure to look out the window and down for that moment the cliff drops off below the plane for an instant rush of vertigo.

Diving on Saba goes well beyond the walls and patch reefs usually found offshore of the better-known Caribbean islands. The volcanic activity that brought Saba from the deep also formed other mountains that failed in their quest for the surface. These seamounts, peaking at 90 to 100 feet below the surface, are little more than a quarter-mile offshore. The deep currents of the open ocean, striking these underwater pinnacles, cause an upwelling of nutrient-laden waters. This movable feast attracts schools of tropicals, close by the pinnacles' coral heads, and cruising pelagic fishes rarely seen by sport divers in such number and so close to shore.

On a pinnacle dive, anything can happen. Large green and hawksbill turtles are often seen broaching the surface and resting on the underwater ledges. An escort of barracuda, rainbow runners, yellow tail snapper and large horse-eye jacks feeding on thimble jellies, or other mid-water cnidarians, will accompany your descent. Shimmering baitfish, tailed by their persecutors — large Nassau groupers, smaller tiger groupers, permits and bar jacks — are commingled with a polychromatic

cloud of wrasse, angelfish, chromis, butterflyfish, hamlets, basslets and damselfish wherever the current flows the strongest. With all this commotion, those graceful and sleek predators inhabiting the apogee of the Caribbean Sea's food chain — the blacktips and reef sharks — will often appear from the blue to remind you who presides over the pinnacles when the divers depart. If you restrain your desire to swim toward them, you may be rewarded with a leisurely, close pass.

Even more leisurely nurse sharks, some very large and equally



Lush — and healthy — hard and soft corals abound.

indolent, rest among the corals. Your safety stop may be interrupted by a visit from ocean triggerfish, a 6-foot wahoo, or a small tuna rocketing by in pursuit of a group of flat needlefish.

Another of Saba's signature dive sites is Diamond Rock, a hulking stone pyramid colored white by untold years of service as a perch for feeding avians. A typical dive profile at the Rock would begin with an 80-foot descent to the sandy bottom that surrounds it. Large stingrays casually look you over during the short swim to the rock face. The sides of the stone monolith are covered with hard and soft corals of all descriptions. In the cracks along the face, large orange and purple-tipped

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giant anemones sway in the current, harboring within their tentacles both Pederson cleaning shrimp and the more numerous squat anemone shrimp. As you make your circuit around Diamond Rock, juvenile barracuda slip in close with their mouths agape at this intrusion into their territorial waters. Flip onto your back and, silhouetted above, a sea turtle sidles by slowly and unconcerned. Uncounted black durgon and blue tang shift to and fro with the surge crashing into the Rock. If there is a place with more action packed into one dive site, I'd like to find it.

After the pinnacles, or Diamond Rock, you may think Saba has little left to dazzle with. That feeling soon fades when the surface interval ends and you glide down to Tent Reef. If Paul Humann labels it "uncommon" to "rare" in the Caribbean, a sharp eye has a fair chance of spotting it on the coral wall of Tent Reef. In only one dive there can be found an impressive array of creatures glimpsed once, if at all, on any other Caribbean island. A representative score card encompasses a large porcupine fish, peacock flounder, a scorpionfish, a very large coral crab, a gold spotted eel, several species of juvenile angelfish, two white-nosed pipefish, four flamingo tongues, a pair of juvenile spotted drum, four green turtles — and a partridge in a pear tree. (Got you!) A black jack, unexpectedly large for such shallow waters, can be found with his co-inhabitants, a black margate, a trio of dog snappers and many squirrelfish, hovering under a large overhang. Yellowhead jawfish poke out of their sand caverns between coral-encrusted boulders.

Tent Reef is also a popular night dive, and night dives on Saba can only be described as awesome. There is the usual exhibition of feeding coral polyps, cocooned parrotfish, octopus, lobster and moray eels on the hunt, but another, truly metaphysical spectacle that well befits a night dive, remains hidden to all but the intrepid diver willing to turn off his light well away from the spoiling torches of his companions. Minutes after he settles to the sandy bottom, and from seemingly nowhere, ethereal lights, an incandescent blue, begin to spiral up from the coral heads in wondrous profusion. Where before there was nothing, the blue lights spark from all sides, above, and out into the inky blackness. Eerie, but enchanting, these ctenophores make George Lucas' science fiction films

SABA FACTS & FIGURES

Saba, pronounced "Say-bah," is the smallest of the Dutch Caribbean islands. The population numbers approximately 1,200. Even though Dutch is the official language, English is universally spoken. U.S. dollars are readily accepted as are major credit cards. The average daytime temperature is 80 throughout the year. At night, particularly in the winter, it can fall to the low 60s. The higher elevations can also be windy, accentuating any drop in temperature. The water temperature varies from a winter's mild low of 78 to a summer's high of 84. Visibility tends to average 100-125 feet in the winter, and 75-100 feet in the summer, but with less consistency due to sporadic plankton blooms. In winter, the seas are sometimes rougher than summer's flat, calmer days. With Saba's scant 42 inches of rainfall annually, your diving isn't likely to be marred by rain and visibility-reducing runoff. However, during the late summer and early fall hurricane season, the normally ideal summer conditions may change radically according to the vagaries of these warm-water cyclones. Saba has a recompression chamber located at Fort Bay, the island's only protected anchorage and pier. Winair provides daily flight service from St. Maartens. U.S. and Canadian citizens are required only to show proof of citizenship, such as a driver's license. Other visitors must provide a passport. Electricity is 110/60 as in the U.S.

amateurish by comparison.

That Saba still possesses such an abundance of life and healthy corals is a testament to the perseverance of Saba conservationists who established the Saba Marine Park in 1987. A notable achievement, the park is one of the few self-supporting marine parks in the world, and has installed 36 permanent mooring buoys. Located on Saba's leeward side where most of best diving lies, the park extends from the shoreline to 200 feet down.

The Marine Park's continued success and vigilant preservation of the rare treasure that is Saba is something we all must hope for and help.



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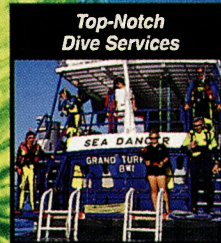
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Story by Rebecca Bowers
photos by Steve Simonsen

COME TO THE VIRGINS

Today, class, we are going to discuss world-class diving in the Caribbean. Naturally, the prime location that comes to mind is ... the U.S. Virgin Islands. No? You say St. Thomas has lost a bit of its luster? Oh, those blasted hurricanes. And overdiving's been a problem? Well, you just come along with me and we'll explore some new adventures and some new ways to look at the world-class diving in the USVI.

Our first stop will be wall diving just a few feet off the north shore beaches of St. Croix. Snorkel out 100 yards, then drop down 30 feet to the bottom and cruise along for 50 or 75 yards through the abundant coral (no hurricane damage here) till you are at the healthy, intriguing wall that is home to 14 designated dive sites. Brightly colored fish are in abundance and the reef bristles with life. Turtles thrive here and there are over 150 varieties of eels.

This wall descends to 3,200 feet and there are several dive companies along the beach that offer complete facilities including full gear rental, guides and instruction.

Now we head to St. Thomas' capital. Yes, Charlotte Amalie is still somewhat shabby looking, but 'neath the briny is a world like no other.

Our first dive here will be a search for tarpon. These fish may weigh 50 pounds (and sometimes reach 200), and are attracted to dive lights that also draw small fish. One of their favorite hangouts is Coki Point on St. Thomas' East End — home of the hurricane-ravaged Coral World Marine Park and St. Thomas' best, most convenient beach dive.

Since tarpon are drawn to divers after the sun goes down, we make our very easy, very safe beach entry around dusk and surface-swim over the sand and fringe corals. On our way to depth — only some 55 to 65 feet — we pass curious and hungry stingrays, barracuda and more.

Aiming your light into the reef, you peer intently at a wicked-looking moray eel or curiously ugly sea cucumber, perhaps even a luminous squid. You swing your light above, and all of a sudden it hits upon a shimmering silver wall. Let me introduce you to Mr. Tarpon and a bunch of his friends.

Go ahead, touch the fish's side. These gentle beasts will swim so close to you that you merely have to reach out to feel the slippery skin with its large scales. The tarpon will follow you until they lose interest. You continue your dive along the reef at Coki Point.

The *West Indies Transport Shoal II*, at 80 feet, is as fine a wreck as any in the Caribbean. Never heard of it? That will change. But for now, *WIT Shoal* is known by few and dived by fewer. She was a Navy LST (landing ship tank) built in 1943 that worked as a freight boat until 1984's Tropical Storm Klaus terminated her surface career.

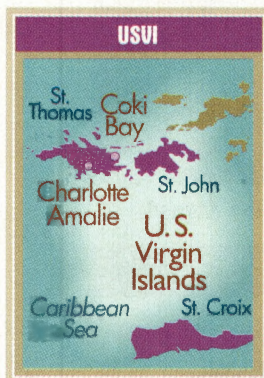
A reputable guide is essential to finding this wreck, as coordinates are not yet common knowledge. Jim McManus, who began Seatrade Ltd. in 1974, knows her well. He first dived her in January 1985 and has made more than 500 dives on her since.

After entering through the pilothouse, you work your way down. This wreck is so thoroughly penetrable, you can explore berth decks and open-air mess decks on your way down into the main holds. In the galley, there's the gas stove, the counter on which potatoes were peeled, and in one cabin you can sit at a desk and "watch" television.

But life goes on. Today a 4-foot barracuda lives in the pilothouse and you will be welcomed by the 500-pound jewfish and 150-pound cubera snapper that have also taken up residence.

But for now we must leave. Oh, yes, there is a great deal more to explore in these waters, but we savored what we saw, and have new memories ... and new plans to return to the Virgin Islands.

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*Story & photo
by Denise Mattia*

THE DRAW OF LA PAZ

Los Islotes, two connecting islands 27 miles north from La Paz, Mexico are permanent breeding grounds for hundreds of sea lions and a lesser count of pelicans, frigates and boobie birds, all of which create a din of protestation as we anchor close to the narrow, guano-covered islands. Below us are massive blocks of basalt, cleaved by weathering in a distant millennium, askew on the ocean floor. Diving in, I move toward the shallow coast and into a thick band of sardines, which blocks my vision. I can only hear sea lions barking. Suddenly a large bull zips through the congestion of tiny fish and skims over my head. He's protecting his cows and newborn pups, and keeps them at a safe distance by charging above me. I get fairly close to the bull but, even on subsequent dives here, I'm unable to approach the cows or their young.

We sail northeast and anchor at El Bajo, a series of submerged mounds, pinnacles and fossilized lava flows. Studies here reveal that the entire area is magnetized along a north-south axis, and that the intensity fluctuates wherever molten lava seeped up through cracks in the sea floor.

Many species of large fish — jacks, pompano, snappers, sailfish, marlin and scalloped hammerhead sharks — are drawn to areas with the highest magnetism, but only hammerheads swim in concentric circles above the peaks and seamounts. The south mount is covered with encrusting sponges and sea fans, among which are nudibranchs, sea slugs, sea stars, sea cucumbers and even sea horses. The largest population of green moray eels I've ever seen live between craggy fissures at the center mound, while at the north mount, amberjacks are so thick they obliterate the sun. We ascend from our third dive at this site and I peer into the indigo depths to see a school of hammerheads circling a pinnacle we explored moments before.

We're just under way when our captain spots

a pod of pilot whales and, without hesitation, orders the pangas (dinghies) into the water. Mask, fins, snorkels and cameras are grabbed, divers pile into pangas, and for the next hour we resemble a team from Outward Bound, slipping into the plankton-rich water just ahead of the whales, which dive and emerge a hundred yards away. We clamber back into the pangas, repeat the sequence and each time see their tails slide beneath the surface of the calm sea. When a pod of dolphins appears, everyone snorkels after them, in a rush



Mahogany snappers off La Paz.



**EL BAJO IS A
SERIES OF
SUBMERGED
MOUNDS,
PINNACLES
AND
FOSSILIZED
LAVA FLOWS**

of excitement. But Luis Ruiz, a gentle bear of a man and crew member of 14 years, tells me to wait. He steers the panga to where he knows the whales are headed, and then gives me the signal to go. I ease into the water and dive down. There they are, 20 feet away. It's awesome seeing these big, benign creatures pass in front of me and swoop into El Bajo's depths.

Scientists are not sure if a magnetic field is dangerous to the animal kingdom. Mankind, with its nets and pollutants, currently causes more harm to marine life than the field around El Bajo, where mammals and fish have been living for centuries. The force may extend to La Paz, and could be the reason I interpreted an aura I'd felt in the area as harmony between earth and water. Perhaps that force was the inspiration, 500 years ago, for its name, The City of Peace. 

Story & photo
by Andrew Wood



IN HAWAII
IT'S BETTER
TO CALL IT
SHORE
DIVING SINCE
MOST DIVING
IS DONE
FROM LAVA
FORMATIONS

Each diving is not usually my favorite way to dive: Walking across hot parking lots, hauling gear through surf and getting sand in my regulator are not things I usually care to do. But whenever I visit the Big Island, most of my plunges are off the beach.

Why does someone who has a general dislike for beach diving end up doing so many dives from shore here? One reason is that it is an inexpensive way to dive. Rental of a full tank of air in Hawaii is around \$7. Throw a couple of sodas and snacks in the cooler and you have a day that is hard to beat for less than 20 bucks. Being able to choose where and when to dive is another appealing feature of shore diving. Since the Big Island has scores of shore dives, if one dive site looks blown out, there are more dive sites down the road.

It is more correct to refer to beach diving in Hawaii as shore diving since much of the best diving is off of lava rock formations. This and the possibility of surf picking up during the dive makes it advisable to wear a full wetsuit.

Here's a quick look at a few shore dives on the Kona coast that the dive shops often recommend. (A word of caution: Watch your bottom time and depth when diving the Big Island.)

PLACE OF REFUGE (HONAUNAU BAY) — Just south of town. This is a great place to start your shore-diving experience in Hawaii. A short walk across a smooth lava flow leads out to an easy entry,

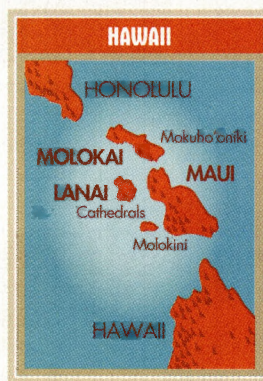
a giant stride into about 15 feet of water. It's also a great place for a night dive, and the shallows offer excellent snorkeling. For those who want to explore the depths, a short kick leads to a steep slope covered in healthy, vibrant coral that drops to 100 feet.

PUAKO — This is about 30 miles north of Kailua. According to Bill Moore, local scuba instructor and boat captain, "There are several places to get in and pretty easy entry if the surf is cooperative. You can drive right up to the entry." Capt. Moore says divers can expect some extensive coral, "and lots of mini-canyons and swim-throughs." Bill informs me that this dive can be done shallow — less than 60 feet — or the diver can "get farther out and drop into the abyss. There is not much there, except for the garden eels at around 100 feet," he says.

OLD AIRPORT — This site is practically in town. It has an easy entry and features a nice wall.

LAALOHA LAVA TUBE (OR "MILE 4" ON ALII DRIVE) — This shallow dive is right in town, and offers arches and formations to explore.

Two reference books that are very useful when diving on the Big Island are Dick Dresie's *Let's go Shore Dive 'N' on the Kona Coast* and *The Divers Guide to Hawaii* by Chuck Thorne and Lou Zitnik. Both provide detailed information about individual dive sites, including driving directions, entry and exit points, and what to expect both above and below water. Visiting one of Kona's dive shops is also a smart idea before setting out. 



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Story & photo
by Linda Richards

INVISIBLE ENCOUNTERS

As we approached the island of Ghavatu in the central region of the Solomon Islands, Jim Light, one of the managers aboard the *Bilikiki*, briefed us on the site: It was to be a macrophotographer's dream come true, and a potential bore to those seeking dramatic scenery and big marine life. The main stage for this show was a sandy bottom in 7 feet of water, which gently sloped to about 40 feet; aside from the pier and the remains of a plane, there was no reef to speak of. This was to be a critter dive of the smaller kind.

Ghavatu had been the site of one of World War II's fiercest battles, but for us the feature attractions were the sea life: several species of rare clownfish, a gigantic sand-burrowing mantis shrimp, cuttlefish by the dozen and hundreds of symbiotic gobies and

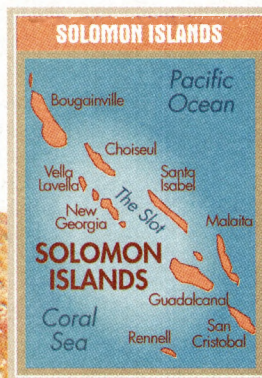
blind snapping shrimp, living in sand-condos along the sea floor.

It was about 10 in the morning when we arrived and since there were many photographers on board, the plan was to stay till sunrise. Seven hours and eight film changes later I was still in the water. I was a kid in a toy store; extraordinary

photo subjects were everywhere. The sun's last rays were streaking through the water and I knew it was almost time for dinner, but I still had half a roll of film; I decided to burn it up on a clownfish family with eggs under the pier.

There was barely enough light to see, so I switched on my strobe's modeling light and settled down on the sand. About five minutes had passed and I was peering through the viewfinder when I first heard the voices — hundreds, maybe thousands of them, rising in a slow crescendo, crashing into a raucous jumble all around me. I slowly looked up from the camera but saw nothing out of the ordinary. I closed my eyes, took a deep breath and rationalized that I was cold, tired and hungry, and concluded that it was indeed possible to experience narcosis in 7 feet of water. I continued shooting while the cacophony of wordless voices surrounded me till it got too loud to stand, then bolted into the silence of open water.

I didn't mention the incident to anyone at dinner. What do you say



A sand-burrowing mantis shrimp.

I WASN'T
EVEN
THINKING OF
THE EARLIER
DIVE UNTIL
THE
MARCHING
STARTED

without sounding insane? After a hot shower and some coffee I'd convinced myself that I'd imagined the whole thing anyway, and to prove it I was going back for a night dive.

Driven by a concoction of macho bravado and sheer stupidity I headed back alone toward the pier. Of course, my light went out. Thinking I knew the terrain, I continued moving slowly across the bottom toward the pier in darkness as I pounded the light into submission. I stopped when I felt something brush across my face. I looked up and found myself staring into a wall of eyes and jumped at least 3 feet. I grasped for my strobe's modeling light, switched it on, aimed it forward and laughed. I'd stumbled into a shimmering cluster of shrimpfish, hanging head-down like Christmas tree ornaments within the feathery branches of a giant black coral tree.

Only slightly frazzled, I made my way under the pier and found a cozy patch of sand in front of a clownfish family. Five uneventful minutes crept by and all was quiet; I wasn't even thinking of the earlier dive — till the marching

started. At first it sounded really far away, like the faint rustling of the ground in the woods when someone or something is coming toward you. But before long I was surrounded by what sounded like hundreds of men walking accompanied by the muffled sound of whispering voices. For the first time ever, underwater panic swept over me. I spun my light into the darkness then sat still, stunned by whatever was happening, real or imagined. For a few minutes intrigue conquered fear then I raced for the big black door.

I probably would have never mentioned this to anyone if the subject was not being discussed when I arrived for breakfast the next morning; apparently almost half the boat had experienced a peculiar encounter of one kind or another the day before. Two weeks prior, staff member Kay Nevin was under the pier by herself in the late afternoon, and heard mysterious calls for help when no one else was in the water.

A real ghost story or just too much time in the water? Hard to say. It sure seemed real to me, but back here at home the ghosts aren't talking. ■

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Paradise Cozumel has announced an all-inclusive scuba special where "kids stay and eat free." The package is available from April 6 to December 22. Any two children between the ages of two and 12 can stay free if they room with their parents. Three-night package is \$351 per person/double occupancy; the seven-night package is \$875 pp/do. Non-diver rates are available. Call 888-341-5993 (U.S. and Canada). E-mail is paradisuc@cancon.rce.com.mx.

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Story by Katie Schickel
Photo by Clara Bement

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Marathon is nearly in the center of the Florida Keys. Just a short drive south from Miami, its accessibility and diving make it an alluring attraction for dive travelers.

I visited Marathon on a sunny December day with air temperatures pushing 85, and the water crystal clear. Our first dive stop was the wreck of the *Thunderbolt*. This 188-foot vessel was a cable layer before taking on life as a research ship and was used by researchers to study lightning. In 1986, after falling derelict, she was cleaned and scuttled in 115 feet of water near the east end of Marathon.

The *Thunderbolt* dive begins on a permanent buoy line that ends 15 feet underwater at a barrel

and hull are completely encrusted with mollusks and coral growth. The massive twin props are still attached and make for interesting photo ops.

A large wheel sits atop the bow, evidence of her former life as a cable layer, and there are many entry doors and hatches throughout the superstructure that allow penetration of the wreck and lead to the engine compartments below. With the proper equipment, the *Thunderbolt* makes an excellent penetration dive. Strong currents sometimes flush through the site, but she is diveable year round.

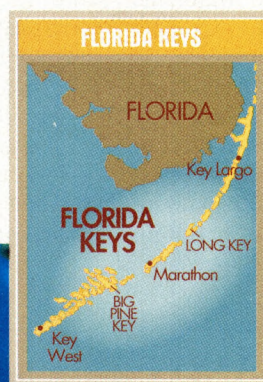
The next place I dived was Sombrero Reef. Easily identified by a lighthouse, Sombrero Reef is a small spur-and-groove coral system, no more than 30 feet deep at any point. Capt. John, from Hall's Dive Center, gave us our headings and pointed us toward coral fingers screaming with life. Protected as part of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, the reef is in exquisite condition.

Water temperature on the reef was 76 degrees; a 3-mm wetsuit and hood were adequate thermal protection. By late winter, the water temp drops to the high 60s, but peak season — summer — sees average temps in the 80s and visibility from 50 to 100 feet.

Sombrero Reef is covered by a colorful palette of marine life. Schools of blue-striped grunts and yellowtail snapper are everywhere. Barracuda, scrawled tilefish, green

morays, red squirrelfish, wrasse and angelfish feed all about the reef.

Toward the end of the dive, we came to a massive brain coral on the west end of the reef. It was some 10 feet high and at its base was a granite plaque dedicated to a Margi Brown and inscribed with an epitaph that read, "Sombrero Reef. Her most favorite place in the whole wide world." After diving Sombrero it was easy to understand the sentiment expressed.



A blue-striped grunt at Sombrero Reef.

float. This makes the spot easy for the local dive shops to spot. The ship sits upright in the sand with the top of the wheelhouse beginning at 70 feet. Almost any time of year, silverside minnows surround the structure and part like clouds as divers swim through them. Amberjacks and barracuda, along with blue French angels and gray angelfish, find shelter in the *Thunderbolt*. The superstructure

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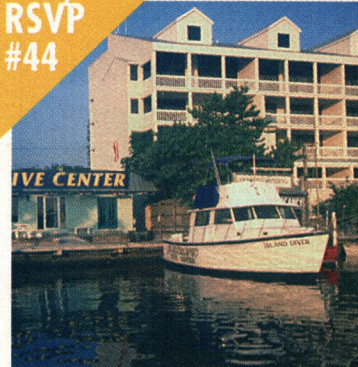
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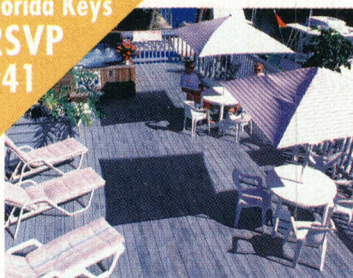
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Story & photo
by Michael P. O'Neill

DOWN ON THE PRINCESS

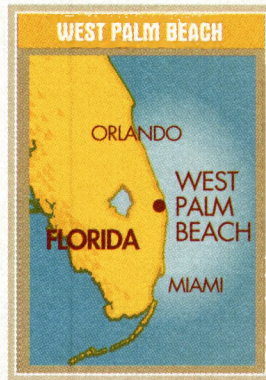
Watching. Waiting — any second now — there! A zillion silversides spill into the room and, pressing the shutter very slowly, I capture the moment for posterity. The burst of light from my strobe illuminates the darkness of the interior chamber and reveals a scorpionfish on the hunt and a lone barracuda, ostracized from his kin, that prefers the *Princess Anne's* current-swept exterior. Copper sweepers, cottonwicks, Spanish hogs and cherub angels hanging around the algae-covered metal skeleton seem a bit smarter and don't dare enjoy the bright sunlight beaming down from the surface 90 feet above. Oblivious to the danger, silversides swim out of the wreck with me and immediately a school of yellow jacks dive-bomb the baitfish, poking holes in their tight formation. The school quickly patches the gaps and prepares for the next onslaught, which comes from all directions. The jacks seem to take advantage of the disorienting effect of my camera's strobe on the baitfish as they pounce, two or three at a time, seconds after the strobe flashes. Scales fly everywhere.

My buddy and I drift the *Princess Anne's* full length toward the stern. Along the way, it's hard not to notice the impact of current, surge and storms. The wreck sits about a mile off Singer Island, arguably the eastern most point of land in Florida, and consequently receives a daily dose of the unforgiving Gulf Stream. Parts of the superstructure have been knocked off the ferry boat and lay scattered on top of the reef. The bridge and upper deck rest parallel to the 350-foot ship, giving the impression there are two vessels instead of just one. Cargo holds that carried cars and passengers are crumbled and unrecognizable, and large sheets of metal swing in the current very much like curtains near an open window. Cobia, scores of yard-long barracuda and amberjacks hover above the wreck, while snappers, grouper and grunts forage in the decaying metal that resembles a trashed playground.

At 100 feet we reach the partially buried twin screws — home to a dozen or so porkfish — turn around and head south, slowly ascending to the upper deck at 75 feet. Corals and sponges are slowly cementing loose chains to the deck. Once drab in color, the chains now exhibit bright oranges and reds and lodge several sergeant majors that aggressively protect their purplish spawns from wrasses and curious divers. Stairways leading below

deck are still used today by technical divers practicing for more challenging wrecks. We make our way toward the bow, always using structure as a shield against the current, until we reach our line. The dive master unhooks it and we ascend through a school of barracuda to our safety stop and our waiting dive boat.

The metamorphosis of the *Princess Anne* from a white-and-black, aging ferry boat to full-blown artificial reef has been quick. About four years



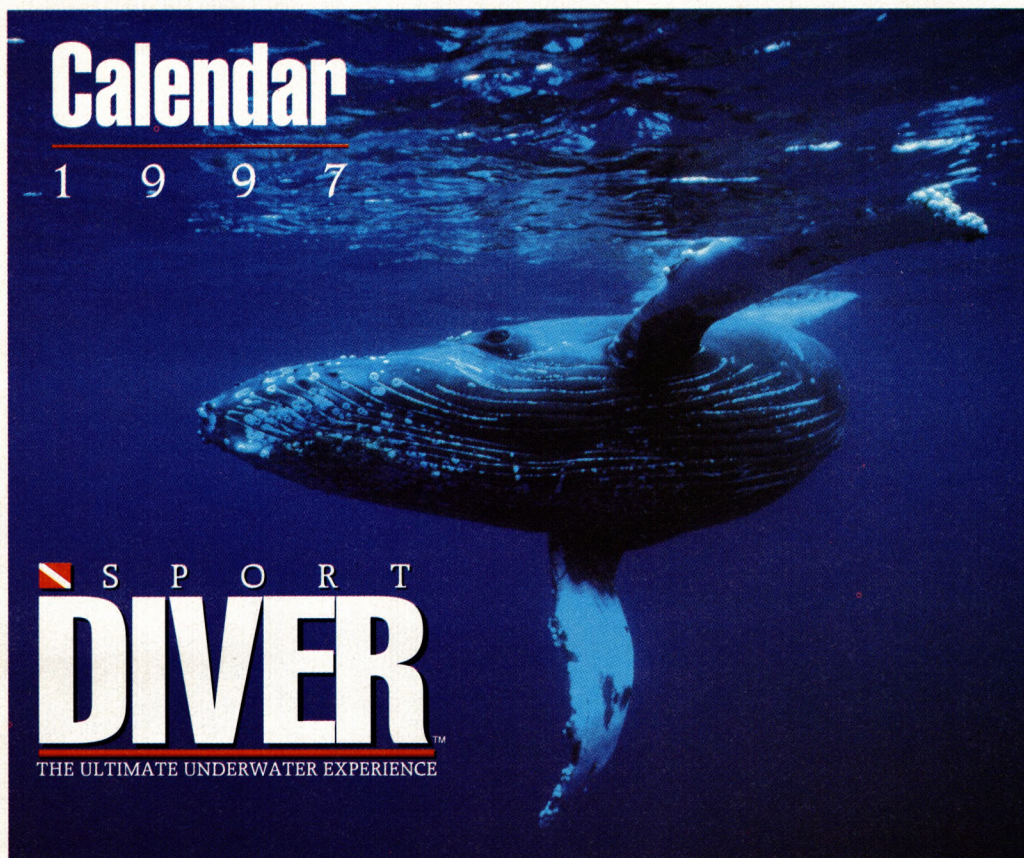
A school of cottonwick grunts visiting the *Princess Anne*.

ago, Palm Beach County's artificial reef program scuttled the ship amidst much fanfare — right on top of a deepwater reef. Despite missing the intended target, an expanse of sand adjacent to the reef, organizers received minimal criticism. The wreck soon lost its sterility and became an instant hit with the local marine life and dive community.

The current dictates the difficulty of diving the *Princess Anne*. On rare occasions, there is none, permitting divers to tour the wreck and to complete their safety stops right on top of it among visiting pelagics. Most often though, the current is moderate to strong and new divers should first get some drift and wreck diving experience before trying it. Advanced divers will certainly enjoy it. With proper planning, adherence to guidelines given by local dive operators and favorable conditions, the *Princess Anne* is definitely worth the effort. ■

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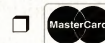
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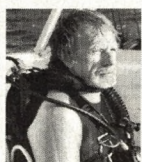
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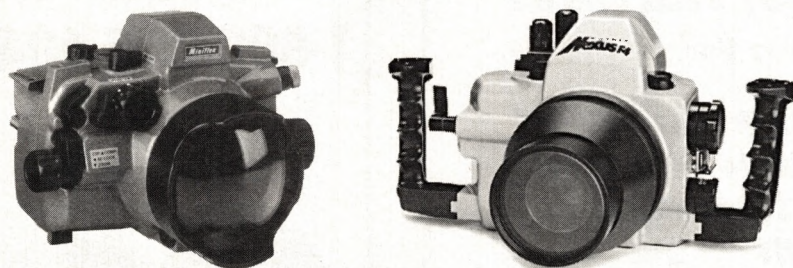
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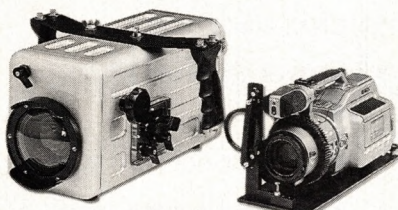
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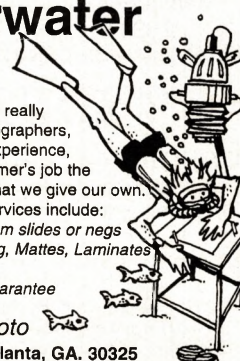
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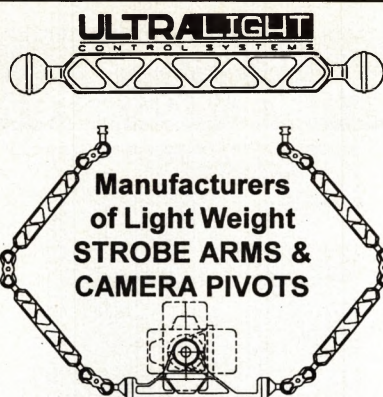
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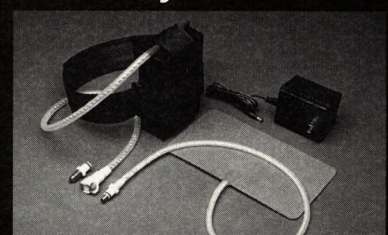
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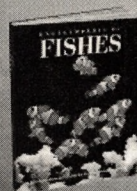
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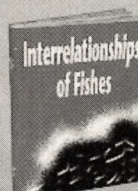
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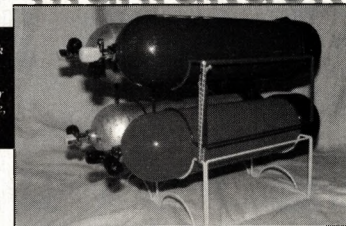
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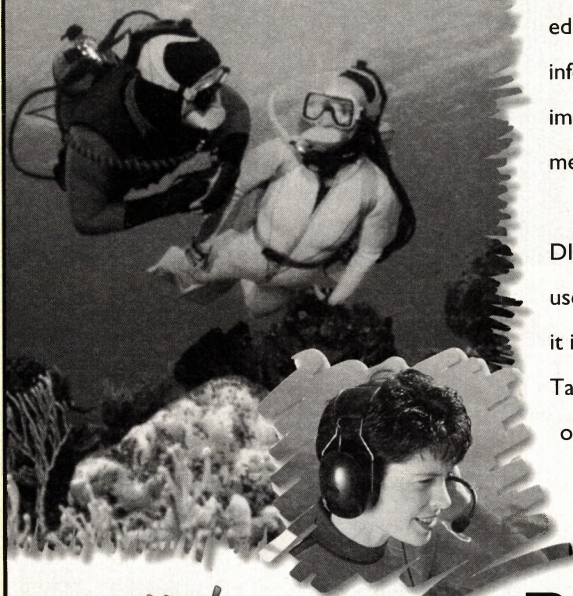
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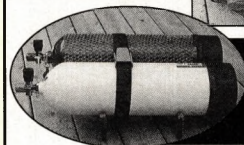
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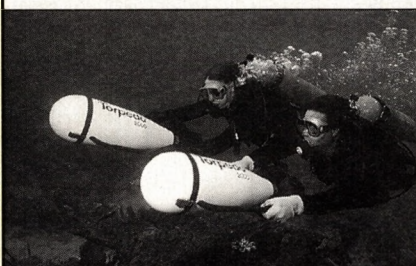
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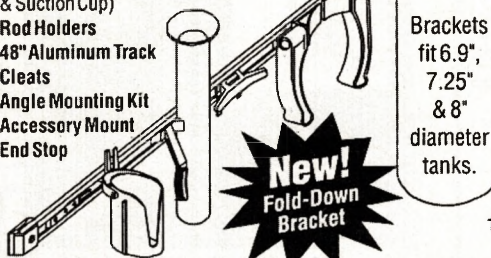
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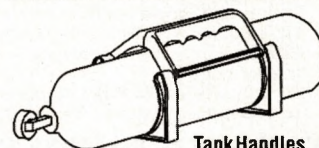
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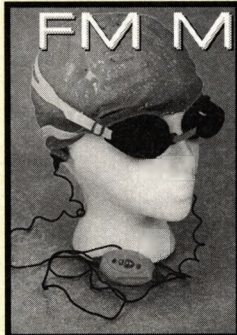
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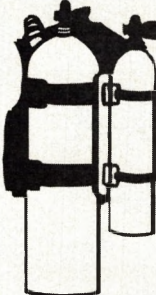


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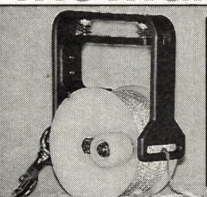
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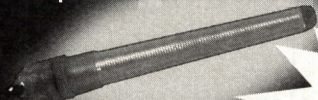
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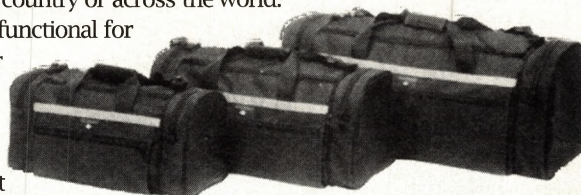
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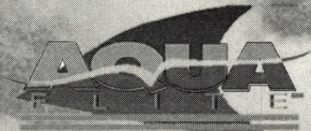
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Dive Log

By Jim Edds



JIM EDDS

DIVE LOG

Diver: Jim Edds

Depth: 10 feet

Dive Site: Gator Hole

Dive Location: Everglades

Equipment: Nikonos V;

15-mm lens.

Mehgan Heaney-Grier is the North American free-dive record holder (155 feet), but this was something a little different for her. Her trainer, Manny Puig, has been interacting — so to speak — with some resident 'Glade critters (Manny also likes to do this with sharks, by the way) and brought Mehgan along to give it a try. While the gators seem to be comfortable around Manny, this was a first for Mehgan. Nonetheless, she dove down and introduced herself to this local. The gator seemed less than impressed.

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